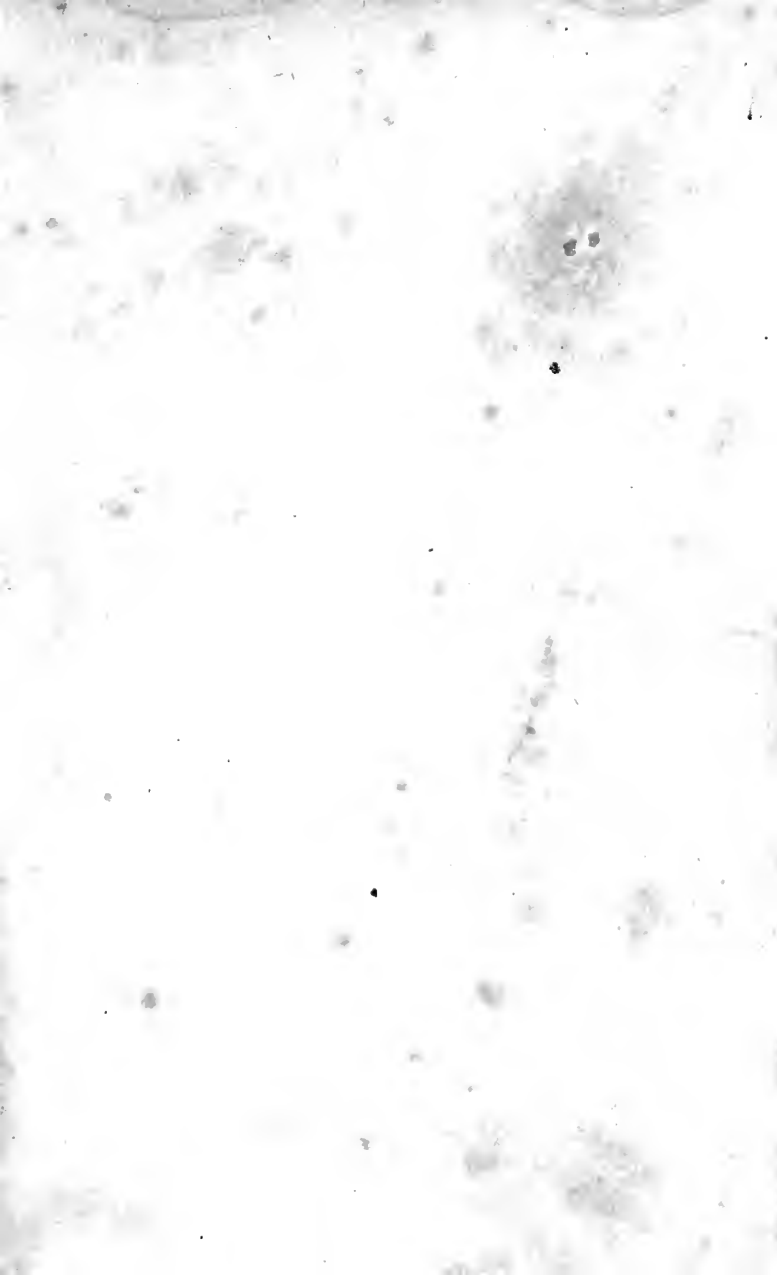


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THE
DISTRICT SCHOOL AS IT WAS,
SCENERY-SHOWING,
AND OTHER WRITINGS.

BY WARREN BURTON.

BOSTON :
PRESS OF T. R. MARVIN, 42 CONGRESS STREET.
1852.

Entered according to an Act of Congress, in the year 1852, by
WARREN BURTON, in the District Court of the District of Massa-
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P R E F A C E .

THIS volume contains such productions only as have already appeared in print. Two of them,—those named in the title page,—have been published as books by themselves, and in this form are still for sale. The publishers have kindly permitted them to be included in this collection, which is to be disposed of to subscribers, for the benefit of the Author.

‘THE DISTRICT SCHOOL AS IT WAS,’ is thus presented to the public by the publishers of the last edition, in an advertisement prefixed to the work.

“The following work was first published in Boston in 1833, and was received with unqualified favor. A second and larger edition was issued in New York, with equal success. Several hundred of this edition were purchased by a distinguished friend of education, in a neighboring State, (Henry Barnard, Esq., of Conn.) and distributed for the purpose of suggesting ideas of reform.

“It was republished in London a few years ago, as giving a faithful description of one of the Institutions of New England.

“It is hoped that it will be deemed particularly appropriate to School Libraries, and not unsuited to others; that it will be sought as an agreeable gift-book from Teachers to Pupils; and lastly, that it will ever be of historical use to rising generations, educated under better auspices, as exhibiting a true and graphic picture of ‘The District School as it Was.’

‘SCENERY-SHOWING’ was published in Boston in 1844, under the title of the Scenery-Shower, the last word being

derived from the verb to *show*. As, however, it is liable to be mispronounced, so as to bear an entirely different meaning, or rather in this connection, no meaning at all, a new but similar title has been adopted. In respect to the object of the work, the reader is referred to its introductory matter in the proper place.

The other pieces, with one exception, have appeared in periodicals. Some of the titles have been slightly changed. The narrative and descriptive portions are more likely to attract readers, while the more solid matter may be neglected ; for this reason, attention is especially asked to the article headed, 'The Divine Agency in Nature.' In this, some views are presented respecting God's presence and immediate action in the material universe, which are not entertained at all by some minds, and which, though believed, are not clearly apprehended by others.

The closing effusion was the first production of the author that ever appeared in print. It was sent to a religious periodical in 1824, in such a way as to leave the writer unknown. It has been sought and found among the things gone by, as per-adventure, by revision, it might make an appropriate conclusion. It was, however, committed to the press, word for word, as it was originally penned by the inexperienced and diffident writer, nearly twenty-eight years ago.

Finally, it is hoped that in this volume will be found not only entertainment but instruction, and that it will be considered a desirable addition to the FAMILY LIBRARY.

Boston, *May* 7, 1852.

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FRONTISPIECE.— See p. 27.

COPIED FROM "THE ONLY SURE GUIDE."

THE
DISTRICT SCHOOL
AS IT WAS.

BY
ONE WHO WENT TO IT.



A WORD

To the glancing Reader, if he will just stop a moment and see what it is.

This little volume was written in the hope that it would be a trifling aid to that improvement which is going on in respect to common schools. It was also intended to present a pleasant picture of some peculiarities which have prevailed in our country, but are now passing away.

It is trusted that no one who has kept* or is keeping a district school after the old fashion, will be offended at the slight degree of satire he will meet with here. Any one of due benevolence is willing to be laughed at, and even to join in the laugh against himself, if it will but hasten the tardy steps of improvement. Indeed, there are quite a number who have reason to believe that the author has here sketched some of his own school-keeping deficiencies.

It may be reasonably anticipated, that the young will be the most numerous readers of these pages. Some scenes have been described, the sports of the school-going season, for in-

* *Keep* school is a very different thing from *teach* school, according to Mr. J. G. Carter, in his *Essays on Popular Education*.

stance, with a special view to their entertainment. It is trusted, however, that the older may not find it unpleasant to recall the pastimes of their early years.

Now and then a word has been used which some young readers may not understand. In this case they are entreated to seek a dictionary, and find out its meaning. They may be assured that the time spent in this way will not be lost. The definition thus acquired may be of use to them the very next book they shall take up, or at least in the course of the reading, their future leisure will allow them to enjoy.

The reader shall no longer be detained from the experience of a supposed school-boy ; if true to nature, no matter whether it really be, or be not, that of the

AUTHOR.

THE DISTRICT SCHOOL AS IT WAS.

CHAPTER I.

THE OLD SCHOOL-HOUSE.

THE Old School-house, as it used to be called, how distinctly it rises to existence anew before the eye of my mind! Here was kept the District School as it *was*. This was the seat of my rustic Alma Mater, to borrow a phrase from collegiate and classic use. It is now no more; and those of similar construction are passing away, never to be patterned again. It may be well, therefore, to describe the edifice wherein and whereabout occurred many of the scenes about to be recorded. I would have future generations acquainted with the accommodations, or rather dis-accommodations, of their predecessors.

The Old School-house in District No. 5, stood on the top of a very high hill, on the north side of what was called the County road. The house of

Capt. Clark, about ten rods off, was the only human dwelling within a quarter of a mile. The reason why this seminary of letters was perched so high in the air, and so far from the homes of those who resorted to it, was this:—Here was the centre of the district, as near as surveyor's chain could designate. The people east would not permit the building to be carried one rod further west, and those of the opposite quarter were as obstinate on their side. So here it was placed; and this continued to be literally the "hill of science" to generation after generation of learners, for fifty years.

The edifice was set half in Capt. Clark's field, and half in the road. The wood-pile lay in the corner made by the east end and the stone wall. The best roof it ever had over it was the changeful sky, which was a little too leaky to keep the fuel at all times fit for combustion, without a great deal of puffing and smoke. The door-step was a broad unhewn rock, brought from the neighboring pasture. It had not a flat and even surface, but was considerably sloping from the door to the road; so that, in icy times, the scholars, in passing out, used to snatch from the scant declivity the transitory pleasure of a slide. But look out for a slip-up, ye careless; for many a time have I seen an urchin's head where his feet were but a second before. And once, the most lofty and perpendicular pedagogue I ever knew, became suddenly horizontalized in his egress.

But we have lingered round this door-step long enough. Before we cross it, however, let us just

glance at the outer side of the structure. It was never painted by man; but the clouds of many years had stained it with their own dark hue. The nails were starting from their fastness, and fellow-clapboards were becoming less closely and warmly intimate. There were six windows, which here and there stopped and distorted the passage of light by fractures, patches, and seams of putty. There were shutters of board, like those of a store, which were of no kind of use, excepting to keep the windows from harm in vacations, when they were the least liable to harm. They might have been convenient screens against the summer sun, were it not that their shade was inconvenient darkness. Some of these, from loss of buttons, were fastened back by poles, which were occasionally thrown down in the heedlessness of play, and not replaced till repeated slams had broken a pane of glass, or the patience of the teacher. To crown this description of externals, I must say a word about the roof. The shingles had been battered apart by a thousand rains; and, excepting where the most defective had been exchanged for new ones, they were dingy with the mold and moss of time. The bricks of the chimney-top were losing their cement, and looked as if some high wind might hurl them from their smoky vocation.

We will now go inside. First, there is an entry which the district were sometimes provident enough to store with dry pine wood, as an antagonist to the greenness and wetness of the other fuel. A door

on the left admits us to the school-room. Here is a space about twenty feet long and ten wide, the reading and spelling parade. At the south end of it, at the left as you enter, was one seat and writing bench, making a right angle with the rest of the seats. This was occupied in the winter by two of the oldest males in the school. At the opposite end was the magisterial desk, raised upon a platform a foot from the floor. The fire-place was on the right, half way between the door of entrance and another door leading into a dark closet, where the girls put their outside garments and their dinner baskets. This also served as a fearful dungeon for the immuring of offenders. Directly opposite the fire-place was an aisle, two feet and a half wide, running up an inclined floor to the opposite side of the room. On each side of this were five or six long seats and writing benches, for the accommodation of the school at their studies. In front of these, next to the spelling floor, were low, narrow seats for abecedarians and others near that rank. In general, the older the scholar, the further from the front was his location. The windows behind the back seat were so low that the traveler could generally catch the stealthy glance of curiosity as he passed. Such was the Old School-house at the time I first entered it. Its subsequent condition and many other inconveniences will be noticed hereafter.

CHAPTER II.

FIRST SUMMER AT SCHOOL—MARY SMITH.

I WAS three years and a half old when I first entered the Old School-house as an abecedarian. I ought, perhaps, to have set foot on the first step of learning's ladder before this ; but I had no elder brother or sister to lead me to school, a mile off ; and it never occurred to my good parents, that they could teach me even the alphabet ; or, perhaps, they could not afford the time, or muster the patience for the tedious process. I had, however, learned the name of capital A, because it stood at the head of the column, and was the similitude of a harrow frame ; of O, also, from its resemblance to a hoop. Its sonorous name, moreover, was a frequent passenger through my mouth, after I had begun to articulate ; its ample sound being the most natural medium by which man, born unto trouble, signifies the pains of his lot. X, too, was familiar, as it seemed so like the end of the old saw-horse that stood in the wood-shed. Further than this my alphabetical lore did not extend, according to present recollection.

I shall never forget my first day of scholarship, as it was the most important era which had yet

occurred to my experience. Behold me on the eventful morning of the first Monday in June, arrayed in my new jacket and trousers, into which my importance had been shoved for the first time in my life. This change in my costume had been deferred till this day, that I might be "all nice and clean to go to school." Then my Sunday hat—(not of soft drab-colored fur, ye city urchins, but of coarse and hard sheep's wool)—my Sunday hat adorned my head for the first time in common week-day use; for my other had been crushed, torn, and soiled out of the seemliness, and almost out of the form, of a hat. My little new basket, too, bought expressly for the purpose, was laden with 'lection-cake and cheese for my dinner, and slung upon my arm. An old Perry's spelling-book, that our boy Ben used at the winter school, completed my equipment.

Mary Smith was my first teacher, and the dearest to my heart I ever had. She was a niece of Mrs. Carter, who lived in the nearest house on the way to school. She had visited her aunt the winter before; and her uncle, being chosen committee for the school at the town-meeting in the spring, sent immediately to her home in Connecticut, and engaged her to teach the summer school. During the few days she spent at his house, she had shown herself peculiarly qualified to interest, and to gain the love of children. Some of the neighbors, too, who had dropped in while she was there, were much pleased with her appearance. She had taught

one season in her native State ; and that she succeeded well, Mr. Carter could not doubt. He preferred her, therefore, to hundreds near by ; and for once the partiality of the relative proved profitable to the district.

Now Mary Smith was to board at her uncle's. This was deemed a fortunate circumstance on my account, as she would take care of me on the way, which was needful to my inexperienced childhood. My mother led me to Mr. Carter's, to commit me to my guardian and instructor for the summer. I entertained the most extravagant ideas of the dignity of the school-keeping vocation, and it was with trembling reluctance that I drew near the presence of so lovely a creature as they told me Mary Smith was. But she so gently took my quivering little hand, and so tenderly stooped and kissed my cheek, and said such soothing and winning words, that my timidity was gone at once.

She used to lead me to school by the hand, while John and Sarah Carter gamboled on, unless I chose to gambol with them ; but the first day, at least, I kept by her side. All her demeanor toward me, and indeed toward us all, was of a piece with her first introduction. She called me to her to read, not with a look and voice as if she were doing a duty she disliked, and was determined I should do mine too, like it or not, as is often the manner of teachers ; but with a cheerful smile and a softening eye, as if she were at a pastime, and wished me to partake of it.

My first business was to master the A B C, and no small achievement it was ; for many a little learner waddles to school through the summer, and wallows to the same through the winter, before he accomplishes it, if he happens to be taught in the manner of former times. This might have been my lot, had it not been for Mary Smith. Few of the better methods of teaching, which now make the road to knowledge so much more easy and pleasant, had then found their way out of or into, the brain of the pedagogical vocation. Mary went on in the old way indeed ; but the whole exercise was done with such sweetness on her part, that the dilatory and usually unpleasant task was to me a pleasure, and consumed not so much precious time as it generally does in the case of heads as stupid as mine. By the close of that summer, the alphabet was securely my own. That hard, and to me unmeaning, string of sights and sounds, were bound forever to my memory by the ties created by gentle tones and looks.

That hardest of all tasks, sitting becomingly still, was rendered easier by her goodness. When I grew restless, and turned from side to side, and changed from posture to posture, in search of relief from my uncomfortableness, she spoke words of sympathy rather than reproof. Thus I was won to be as quiet as I could. When I grew drowsy, and needed but a comfortable position to drop into sleep and forgetfulness of the weary hours, she would gently lay me at length on my seat, and

leave me just falling to slumber, with her sweet smile the last thing beheld or remembered.

Thus wore away my first summer at the district school. As I look back on it, faintly traced on memory, it seems like a beautiful dream, the images of which are all softness and peace. I recollect that, when the last day came, it was not one of light-hearted joy—it was one of sadness, and it closed in tears. I was now obliged to stay at home in solitude, for the want of playmates, and in weariness of the passing time, for the want of something to do; as there was no particular pleasure in saying A B C all alone, with no Mary Smith's voice and looks for an accompaniment.

CHAPTER III.

THE SPELLING-BOOK.

As the spelling-book was the first manual of instruction used in school, and kept in our hands for many years, I think it worthy of a separate chapter in these annals of the times that are past. The spelling-book used in our school from time immemorial—immemorial at least to the generation of learners to which I belonged—was thus entitled: “THE ONLY SURE GUIDE to the English Tongue, by William Perry, Lecturer of the English Language in the Academy of Edinburgh, and author of several valuable school-books.” What a magnificent title! To what an enviable superiority had its author arrived! The *Only Sure Guide!* Of course, the book must be as infallible as the catholic creed, and its author the very Pope of the jurisdiction of letters.

But the contents of the volume manifested most clearly the pontifical character of the illustrious man; for, from the beginning to the end thereof, faith and memory were all that was demanded of the novice. The understanding was no more called on than that of the devotee at his Latin mass-book. But let us enter on particulars. In the first place,

there was a frontispiece. We little folks, however, did not then know that the great picture facing the title-page was so denominated. This frontispiece consisted of two parts. In the upper division, there was the representation of a tree laden with fruit of the largest description. It was intended, I presume, as a striking and alluring emblem of the general subject, the particular branches, and the rich fruits of education. But the figurative meaning was above my apprehension, and no one took the trouble to explain it. I supposed it nothing but the picture of a luxuriant apple-tree ; and it always made me think of that good tree in my father's orchard, so dear to my palate,—the pumpkin-sweeting.

There ran a ladder from the ground up among the branches, which was designed to represent the ladder of learning ; but of this I was ignorant. Little boys were ascending this in pursuit of the fruit that hung there so temptingly. Others were already up in the tree, plucking the apples directly from their stems ; while others were on the ground, picking up those that had dropped in their ripeness. At the very top of the tree, with his head reared above all fruit or foliage, was a bare-headed lad with a book in his hand, which he seemed intently studying. I supposed that he was a boy that loved his book better than apples, as all good boys should,—one who in very childhood had trodden temptation under foot. But, indeed, it was only a boy who was gathering fruit from the topmost boughs, according to the figurative meaning, as the others

were from those lower down. Or rather, as he was portrayed, he seemed like one who had culled the fairest and highest growing apples, and was trying to learn from a book where he should find a fresh and loftier tree, upon which he might climb to a richer repast and a nobler distinction.

This picture used to retain my eye longer than any other in the book. It was probably more agreeable on account of the other part of the frontispiece below it. This was the representation of a school at their studies, with the master at his desk. He was pictured as an elderly man, with an immense wig enveloping his head and bagging about his neck, and with a face that had a sort of half-way look, or rather, perhaps, a compound look, made up of an expression of perplexity at a sentence in parsing, or a sum in arithmetic, and a frown at the playful urchins in the distant seats. There could not have been a more capital device by which the pleasures of a free range and delicious eating, both so dear to the young, might be contrasted with stupefying confinement and longing palates in the presence of crabbed authority. Indeed, the first thing the Only Sure Guide said to its pupil was, "Play truant and be happy;" and most of the subsequent contents were not of a character to make the child forget this preliminary advice. These contents I was going on to describe in detail; but on second thought I forbear, for fear that the description might be as tedious to my readers as the study of them was to me. Suffice it to say, there

was talk about vowels and consonants, diphthongs and triphthongs, monosyllables and polysyllables, orthography and punctuation, and even about geography, all which was about as intelligible to us, who were obliged to commit it to memory year after year, as the fee-faw-fum uttered by the giant in one of our story-books.

Perry's spelling-book, as it was in those days, at least, is now out of use. It is no where to be found except in fragments in some dark corner of a country cupboard or garret. All vestiges of it will soon disappear for ever. What will the rising generations do, into what wilds of barbarism will they wander, into what pits of ignorance fall, without the aid of the Only Sure Guide to the English tongue?

CHAPTER IV.

FIRST WINTER AT SCHOOL.

How I longed for the winter school to begin, to which I looked forward as a relief from my do-nothing days, and as a renewal, in part at least, of the soft and glowing pleasures of the past summer! But the schoolmaster, the thought of him was a fearful looking-for of frowns and ferulings. Had I not heard our Ben tell of the direful punishments of the winter school; of the tingling hand, black and blue with twenty strokes, and not to be closed for a fortnight from soreness? Did not the minister and the schoolmaster of the preceding winter visit together at our house, one evening, and did I not think the schoolmaster far the more awful man of the two? The minister took me in his lap, gave me a kiss, and told me about his own little Charley at home, whom I must come and see; and he set me down with the impression that he was not half so terrible as I had thought him. But the schoolmaster condescended to no words with me. He was as stiff and unstooping as the long kitchen fire-shovel, and as solemn of face as a cloudy fast-day. A trifling incident happened which increased my dread, and darkened my remembrance of him by

another shade. I had slily crept to the table on which stood the hats of our visitors, and in childish curiosity had first got hold of a glove, then a letter, which reposed in the crown of the magisterial head-covering. The owner's eye suddenly caught me at the mischief, and he gave me a look and a shake of his upper extremity, so full of "Let it alone or I will flog you" in their meaning, that I was struck motionless for an hour with fright, and had hard work to dam up, with all the strength of my quivering lips, a choking baby cry. Thenceforth, school-masters to my timid heart were of all men the most to be dreaded.

The winter at length came, and the first day of the school was fixed and made known, and the longed-for morning finally arrived. With hoping, yet fearing heart, I was led by Ben to school. But my fears respecting the teacher were not realized that winter. He had nothing particularly remarkable about him to my little mind. He had his hands too full of the great things of the great scholars to take much notice of me, excepting to hear me read my Abs four times a day. This exercise he went through like a great machine, and I like a little one; so monotonous was the hum-drum and regular the recurrence of *ab, eb, ib, ob, ub, &c.*, from day to day, and week to week. To recur to the metaphor of a ladder by which progress in learning is so often illustrated, I was all summer on the lowest round, as it were, lifting first one foot and then the other, still putting it down in the same

place, without going any higher; and all winter, while at school, I was as wearily tap-tapping it on the second step, with the additional drawback of not having Mary Smith's sweet manners to win me up to the stand, help me cheerfully through the task, and set me down again, pleased with her, if with nothing else.

There was one circumstance, however, in the daily routine, which was a matter of some little excitement and pleasure. I was put into a class. Truly my littleness, feelingly, if not actually and visibly, enlarged itself, when I was called out with Sam Allen, Henry Green, and Susan Clark, to take our stand on the floor as the sixth class. I marched up with the tread of a soldier; and, thinks I, "Who has a better right to be at the head than myself?" so the head I took, as stiff and as straight as a cob. My voice, too, if it lost none of its treble, was pitched a key louder, as *a—b ab* rang through the realm. And when we had finished, I looked up among the large scholars, as I strutted to my seat, with the thought, "I am almost as big as you now," puffing out my tiny soul. Now, moreover, I held the book in my own hand, and kept the place with my own finger, instead of standing like a very little boy, with my hands at my side, following with my eye the point of the mistress's scissors.

There was one terror at this winter school which I must not omit in this chronicle of my childhood. It arose from the circumstance of meeting so many faces which I had never seen before, or at least had

never seen crowded-together in one body. All the great boys and girls, who had been kept at home during the summer, now left axes and shovels, needles and spinning-wheels, and poured into the winter school. There they sat, side by side, head after head, row above row. For this I did not care; but every time the master spoke to me for any little misdemeanor, it seemed as if all turned their eyes on my timid self, and I felt petrified by the gaze. But this simultaneous and concentrated eye-shot was the most distressing when I happened late, and was obliged to go in after the school were all seated in front of my advance. Those forty—I should say eighty eyes (for most of them had two apiece,) glancing up from their books as I opened the door, were as much of a terror to me as so many deadly gun-muzzles would be to a raw military recruit. I tottered into the room and toward my seat with a palsying dismay, as if every one was aiming an eye for my destruction.

The severest duty I was ever called to perform was sitting on that little front seat, at my first winter school. My lesson in the Abs conveyed no ideas, excited no interest, and, of course, occupied but very little of my time. There was nothing before me on which to lean my head, or lay my arms, but my own knees. I could not lie down to drowse, as in summer, for want of room on the crowded seat. How my limbs ached for the freedom and activity of play! It sometimes seemed as if a drubbing from the master, or a kick across the school-house, would have been a pleasant relief.

But these bonds upon my limbs were not all. I had trials by fire in addition. Every cold forenoon, the old fire-place, wide and deep, was kept a roaring furnace of flame, for the benefit of blue noses, chattering jaws, and aching toes, in the more distant regions. The end of my seat, just opposite the chimney, was oozy with melted pitch, and sometimes almost smoked with combustion. Judge, then, of what living flesh had to bear. It was a toil to exist. I truly ate the bread of instruction, or rather nibbled at the crust of it, in the sweat of my face.

But the pleasures and the pains of this season at school did not continue long. After a few weeks, the storms and drifts of midwinter kept me mostly at home. Henry Allen was in the same predicament. As for Susan Clark, she did not go at all after the first three or four days. In consequence of the sudden change from roasting within doors to freezing without, she took a violent cold, and was sick all winter.

CHAPTER V.

SECOND SUMMER — MARY SMITH AGAIN.

THE next summer, Mary Smith was the mistress again. She gave such admirable satisfaction, that there was but one unanimous wish that she should be re-engaged. Unanimous, I said, but it was not quite so ; for Capt. Clark, who lived close by the school-house, preferred somebody else, no matter whom, fit or not fit, who should board with him, as the teachers usually did. But Mary would board with her aunt Carter, as before. Then Mr. Patch's family grumbled not a little, and tried to find fault ; for they wanted their Polly should keep the school and board at home, and help her mother night and morning, and save the pay for the board to boot. Otherwise Polly must go into a distant district, to less advantage to the family purse. Mrs. Patch was heard to guess that "Polly could keep as good a school as any body else. Her edication had cost enough any how. She had been to our school summer after summer, and winter after winter, ever since she was a little gal, and had then been to the 'cademy three months besides. She had moreover taught three summers already, and was twenty-one ; whereas Mary Smith had taught but two, and was

only nineteen." But the committee had not such confidence in the experienced Polly's qualifications. All who had been to school with her knew that her head was dough, if ever head was. And all who had observed her school-keeping career (she never kept but once in the same place) pretty soon came to the same conclusion, notwithstanding her loaf of brains had been three months in that intellectual oven called by her mother the 'cademy.

So Mary Smith kept the school, and I had another delightful summer under her care and instruction. I was four years and a half old now, and had grown an inch. I was no tiny, whining, half-scared baby, as in the first summer. No, indeed; I had been to the winter school, had read in a class, and had stood up at the fire with the great boys, had seen a snow-ball fight, and had been accidentally hit once by the icy missile of big-fisted Joe Swagger.

I looked down upon two or three fresh, slobbering abecedarians with a pride of superiority, greater perhaps than I ever felt again. We read not in *ab*, *eb*, &c., but in words that meant something; and, before the close of the summer, in what were called the "Reading Lessons," that is, little words arranged in little sentences.

Mary was the same sweet angel this season as the last. I did not, of course, need her soothing and smiling assiduity as before; but still she was a mother to me in tenderness. She was forced to caution us younglings pretty often; yet it was done

with such sweetness, that a caution from her was as effectual as would be a frown, and indeed a blow, from many others. At least, so it was with me. She used to resort to various severities with the refractory and idle, and in one instance she used the ferule ; but we all knew, and the culprit knew, that it was well deserved.

At the close of the school, there was a deeper sadness in our hearts than on the last summer's closing day. She had told us that she should never be our teacher again,—should probably never meet many of us again in this world. She gave us much parting advice about loving and obeying God, and loving and doing good to every body. She shed tears as she talked to us, and that made our own flow still more. When we were dismissed, the customary and giddy laugh was not heard. Many were sobbing with grief, and even the least sensitive were softened and subdued to an unusual quietness.

The last time I ever saw Mary was Sunday evening, on my way home from meeting. As we passed Mr. Carter's, she came out to the chaise where I sat between my parents, to bid us good-by. Oh, that last kiss, that last smile, and those last tones ! Never shall I forget them, so long as I have power to remember or capacity to love. The next morning she left for her native town ; and before another summer, she was married. As Mr. Carter soon moved from our neighborhood, the dear instructress never visited it again.

CHAPTER VI.

THIRD SUMMER—MEHITABEL HOLT AND OTHER
INSTRUCTRESSES.

THIS summer, a person named Mehitabel Holt was our teacher. It was with eager delight that I set out for school on the first morning. The dull months that intervened between the winter school and the summer had seemed longer than ever. I longed for the companionship and the sports of school. I had heard nothing about the mistress, excepting that she was an experienced and approved one. On my way, the image of something like Mary Smith arose to my imagination; a young lady with pleasant face and voice, and a winning gentleness of manner. This was natural; for Mary was the only mistress I had ever been to, and in fact the only one I had ever seen, who made any impression on my mind in her school-keeping capacity. What, then, was my surprise when my eyes first fell on Mehitabel Holt! I shall not describe how nature had made her, or time had altered her. Engaging manners and loveliness of character do not depend on the freshness of youth, fineness of complexion, or symmetry of form. She was not lovely; her first appearance indicated this;

for the disposition will generally speak through the face. Subsequent experience proved Mehitabel to differ from the dear Mary as much as all that is sour does from the quintessence of sweetness. She had been well-looking, indeed rather beautiful once, I have heard ; but, if so, the acidity of her temper had diffused itself through, and lamentably corroded this valued gift of nature.

She kept order ; for her punishments were horrible, especially to us little ones. She dungeoned us in that windowless closet just for a whisper. She tied us to her chair-post for an hour, because sportive nature tempted our fingers and toes into something like play. If we were restless on our seats, wearied of our posture, fretted by the heat, or sick of the unintelligible lesson, a twist of the ear, or a snap on the head from her thimbled finger, reminded us that sitting perfectly still was the most important virtue of a little boy in school. Our forenoon and afternoon recess was allowed to be five minutes only ; and, even during that time, our voices must not rise above the tone of quiet conversation. That delightful exercise of juvenile lungs, hallooing, was a capital crime. Our noonings, in which we used formerly to rejoice in the utmost freedom of legs and lungs, were now like the noonings of the Sabbath, in the restraints imposed upon us. As Mehitabel boarded at Captain Clark's, any ranging in the fields, or raising of the voice, was easily detected by her watchful senses.

As the prevalent idea in those days respecting a

good school was, that there should be no more sound and motion than was absolutely necessary, Mehitabel was on the whole, popular with the parents. She kept us still, and forced us to get our lessons; and that was something uncommon in a mistress. So she was employed the next summer to keep our childhood in bondage. Had her strict rules been enforced by any thing resembling Mary Smith's sweet and sympathetic disposition and manners, they would have been endurable. But, as it was, our schooling those two summers was a pain to the body, a weariness to the mind, and a disgust to the heart.

I shall not devote a separate chapter to all my summer teachers. What more I may have to say of them I shall put into this. They were none of them like Mehitabel in severity, nor all of them equal to her in usefulness, and none of them equal in any respect to Mary Smith. Some were very young, scarcely sixteen, and as unfit to manage that "harp of thousand strings," the human mind, as is the unskilled and changeful wind to manage any musical instrument by which science and taste delights the ear. Some kept tolerable order; others made the attempt, but did not succeed; others did not even make the attempt. All would doubtless have done better, had they been properly educated and disciplined themselves.

After I was ten years old, I ceased to attend the summer school except in foul weather, as in fair I was wanted at home on the farm. These scatter-

ing days, I and others of nearly the same age were sent to school by our parents, in hopes that we should get at least a snatch of knowledge. But this rainy-day schooling was nothing but vanity to us, and vexation of spirit to the mistress. We could read and spell better than the younger and regular scholars, and were puffed up with our own superiority. We showed our contempt for the mistress and her orders, by doing mischief ourselves, and leading others into temptation.

- If she had the boldness to apply the ferule, we laughed in her face, unless her blows were laid on with something like masculine strength. In case of such severity, we waited for our revenge till the close of the school for the day, when we took the liberty to let saucy words reach her ear, especially if the next day was likely to be fair, and we of course were not to re-appear in her realm till foul weather again.

CHAPTER VII.

LITTLE BOOKS PRESENTED THE LAST DAY OF THE SCHOOL.

THERE was one circumstance connected with the history of summer schools of so great importance to little folks, that it must not be omitted. It was this. The mistress felt obliged to give little books to all her pupils on the closing day of her school. Otherwise she would be thought stingy, and half the good she had done during the summer would be canceled by the omission of the expected donations. If she had the least generosity, or hoped to be remembered with any respect and affection, she must devote a week's wages, and perhaps more, to the purchase of these little toy-books. My first present, of course, was from Mary Smith. It was not a little book the first summer, but it was something that pleased me more.

The last day of the school had arrived. All, as I have somewhere said before, were sad that it was now to finish. My only solace was that I should now have a little book, for I was not unmoved in the general expectation that prevailed. After the reading and spelling, and all the usual exercises of the school, were over, Mary took from her desk a pile of the glittering little things we were looking

for. What beautiful covers,—red, yellow, blue, green! Oh! not the first buds of spring, not the first rose of summer, not the rising moon, nor gorgeous rainbow, seemed so charming as that first pile of books now spread out on her lap, as she sat in her chair in front of the school. All eyes were now centered on the outspread treasures. Admiration and expectation were depicted on every face. Pleasure glowed in every heart; for the worst, as well as the best, calculated with certainty on a present. What a beautifier of the countenance agreeable emotions are! The most ugly visaged were beautiful now with the radiance of keen anticipation. The scholars were called out one by one to receive the dazzling gifts, beginning at the oldest. I, being an abecedarian, must wait till the last; but as I knew that my turn would surely come in due order, I was tolerably patient. But what was my disappointment, my exceeding bitterness of grief, when the last book on Mary's lap was given away, and my name not yet called! Every one present had received, except myself and two others of the A B C rank. I felt the tears starting to my eyes; my lips were drawn to their closest pucker to hold in my emotions from audible outcry. I heard my fellow-sufferer at my side draw long and heavy breaths, the usual preliminaries to the bursting out of grief. This feeling, however, was but momentary; for Mary immediately said, "Charles and Henry and Susan, you may now all come to me together:" at the same time her hand was put into

her work-bag. We were at her side in an instant, and in that time she held in her hand—what? Not three little picture-books, but what was to us a surprising novelty, viz., three little birds wrought from sugar by the confectioner's art. I had never seen or heard or dreamed of such a thing. What a revulsion of delighted feeling now swelled my little bosom! "If I should give you books," said Mary, "you could not read them at present; so I have got for you what you will like better perhaps, and there will be time enough for you to have books, when you shall be able to read them. So, take these little birds, and see how long you can keep them." We were perfectly satisfied, and even felt ourselves distinguished above the rest. My bird was more to me than all the songsters in the air, although it could not fly, or sing, or open its mouth. I kept it for years, until by accident it was crushed to pieces, and was no longer a bird.

But Susan Clark—I was provoked at her. Her bird was nothing to her but a piece of pepperminted sugar, and not a keepsake from Mary Smith. She had not left the school-house before she had nibbled off its bill. But her mother was always tickling her palate with sugar-plums, raisins, cookies, and such like, which the rest of us were not accustomed to; and she had no idea that the sweet little sugar bird was made, at least was given, for the sake of her heart, rather than her palate.

The next summer, my present was the "Death and Burial of Cock Robin." This was from the

dearly loved Mary, too. I could then do something more than look at the pictures. I could read the tragic history which was told in verse below the pictured representations of the mournful drama. How I used to gaze and wonder at what I saw in that little book! Could it be that all this really took place; that the sparrow really did do the murderous deed with his bow and his arrow? I never knew before that birds had such things. Then there was the fish with his dish, the rook with his book, the owl with his shovel, &c. Yet, if it were not all true, why should it be so pictured and related in the book? I had the impression that every thing that was printed in a book was surely true; and as no one thought to explain to me the nature of a fable, I went on puzzled and wondering, till progressive reason at length divined its meaning. But Cock Robin, with its red cover and gilded edges—I have it now. It is the first little book I ever received, and it was from Mary Smith; and, as it is the only tangible memento of her goodness that I possess, I shall keep it as long as I can.

I had a similar present each successive season, so long as I regularly attended the summer school. What marvels did they contain! How curiosity and wonder feasted on their contents! They were mostly about giants, fairies, witches, and ghosts. By this kind of reading, superstition was trained up to a monstrous growth; and, as courage could not thrive in its cold and gloomy shadow, it was a sickly shoot for years. Giants, fairies, witches, and

ghosts, were ready to pounce upon me from every dark corner in the day time, and from all around in the night, if I happened to be alone. I trembled to go to bed alone for years; and I was often almost paralyzed with horror when I chanced to wake in the stillness of midnight, and my ever-busy fancy presented the grim and grinning images with which I supposed darkness to be peopled.

I wish I had all those little books now. I would keep them as long as I live, and at death would bequeath them to a national Lyceum, or some other institution, to be kept as a schoolmaster keeps a pupil's first writing, as a specimen, or a mark to show what improvement has been made. Indeed, if improvement has been made in any-thing, it has been in respect to children's books. When I compare the world of fact in which the "Little Philosophers" of the present day live, observe, and enjoy, with the visionary regions where I wandered, wondered, believed, and trembled, I almost wish to be a child again, to know the pleasure of having earliest curiosity fed with fact, instead of fiction and folly, and to know so much about the great world, with so young a mind.

CHAPTER VIII.

GRAMMAR—YOUNG LADY'S ACCIDENCE—MURRAY—PARS-
ING—POPE'S ESSAY.

ON my fifth summer, at the age of seven and a half, I commenced the study of grammar. The book generally used in our school by beginners, was called the Young Lady's Accidence. I had the honor of a new one. The Young Lady's Accidence! How often have I gazed on that last word, and wondered what it meant! Even now, I cannot define it, though, of course, I have a guess at its meaning. Let me turn this very minute to that oracle of definitions, the venerable Webster: "A small book containing the rudiments of grammar." That is it, then. But what an intelligible and appropriate term for a little child's book! The mysterious title, however, was most appropriate to the contents of the volume; for they were all mysterious, and that for years, to my poor understanding.

Well, my first lesson was to get the Parts of Speech, as they are called. What a grand achievement to engrave on my memory these ten separate and strange words! With what ardor I took my lesson from the mistress, and trudged to my seat!

It was a new study, and it was the first day of the school, moreover, before the bashfulness occasioned by a strange teacher had subsided, and before the spirit of play had been excited. So there was nothing at the moment to divert me from the lofty enterprise.

Reader, let your mind's eye peep into that old school-house. See that little boy in the second high seat from the front, in home-made and home-dyed pea-green* cotton jacket and trowsers, with a clean Monday morning collar turned out from his neck. His new book is before him on the bench, kept open by his left hand. His right supports his head on its palm, with the corresponding elbow pressed on the bench. His lips move, but at first very slowly. He goes over the whole lesson in a low whisper. He now looks off his book, and pronounces two or three of the first,—article, noun, pronoun; then just glances at the page, and goes on with two or three more. He at length repeats several words without looking. Finally, he goes through the long catalogue, with his eye fastened on vacancy. At length, how his lips flutter, and you hear the parts of speech whizzing from his tongue like feathered arrows! A good simile that. Parts of speech—they are indeed arrows of thought, though as yet armed with no point, and shot at no mark.

There, the rigmarole is accomplished. He starts up, and is at the mistress's side in a moment.

* This was the name given by the housewives to the color.

"Will you hear my lesson, ma'am?" As she takes the book, he looks directly in her face, and repeats the afore-mentioned words loudly and distinctly, as if there were no fear of failure. He has got as far as the adverb; but now he hesitates, his eye drops, his lips are open ready for utterance, but the word does not come. He shuts them, he presses them hard together, he puts his finger to them, and there is a painful hiatus in his recitation, a disconnection, an *anti* to the very word he is after. "Conjunction," says the mistress. The little hand leaves the lips, at the same time that an involuntary "Oh!" bursts out from them. He lifts his head and his eye, and repeats with spirit the delinquent word, and goes on without hesitation to the end of the lesson. "Very well," says the teacher, or the hearer of the school; for she rather listened to than instructed her pupils. "Get so far for the next lesson." The child bows, whirls on his heel, and trips to his seat, mightily satisfied excepting with that one failure of memory, when that thundering word, *conjunction*, refused to come at his will. But that word he never forgot again. The failure fastened it in his memory for ever. This pea-green boy was myself, the present historian of the scene.

My next lesson lagged a little; my third seemed quite dull; my fourth I was two days in getting. At the end of the week, I thought that I could get along through the world very well without grammar, as my grandfather had done before me. But my mistress did not agree with me, and I was forced

to go on. I contrived, however, to make easy work of the study. I got frequent, but very short lessons, only a single sentence at a time. This was easily committed to memory, and would stay on till I could run up and toss it off in recitation, after which it did not trouble me more. The recollection of it puts me in mind of a little boy lugging in wood, a stick at a time. My teacher was so ignorant of the philosophy of mind, that she did not know that this was not as good a way as any; and indeed, she praised me for my smartness. The consequence was, that, after I had been through the book, I could scarcely have repeated ten lines of it, excepting the very first and the very last lessons. Had it been ideas instead of words that had thus escaped from my mind, the case would have been different. As it was, the only matter of regret was, that I had been forming a bad habit, and had imbibed an erroneous notion, to wit, that lessons were to be learned simply to be recited.

The next winter this *Accidence* was committed, not to memory, but to oblivion; for, on presenting it to the master the first day of the school, he told me it was old-fashioned and out of date, and I must have Murray's *Abridgment*. So Murray was purchased, and I commenced the study of grammar again, excited by the novelty of a new and clean and larger book. But this soon became even more dull and dry than its predecessor; for it was more than twice the size, and the end of it was at the most discouraging distance of months, if not of

years. I got only half way through the verb this winter. The next summer I began the book again, and arrived at the end of the account of the parts of speech. The winter after, I went over the same ground again, and got through the rules of syntax, and felt that I had accomplished a great work. The next summer I reviewed the whole grammar ; for the mistress thought it necessary to have "its most practical and important parts firmly fixed in the memory, before attempting the higher exercises of the study." On the third winter, I began to apply my supposed knowledge in the process of *passing*, as it was termed by the master. The very pronunciation of this word shows how little the teacher exercised the power of independent thought. He had been accustomed to hear parse called *pass* ; and, though the least reflection would have told him it was not correct, that reflection came not, and for years the grammarians of our district school *passed*. However, it was rightly so called. It *was* passing, as said exercise was performed ; passing over, by, around, away, from the science of grammar, without coming near it, or at least without entering into it with much understanding of its nature. Mode, tense, case, government and agreement, were ever flying from our tongues, to be sure ; but their meaning was as much a mystery as the hocus pocus of a juggler.

At first we parsed in simple prose, but soon entered on poetry. Poetry—a thing which to our apprehension differed from prose in this only, that

each line began with a capital letter, and ended usually with a word sounding like another word at the end of the adjoining line. But, unskilled as we all generally were in the art of parsing, some of us came to think ourselves wonderfully acute and dexterous nevertheless. When we perceived the master himself to be in doubt and perplexity, then we felt ourselves on a level with him, and ventured to oppose our *guess* to his. And if he appeared a dunce extraordinary, as was sometimes the case, we used to put ourselves into the *potential* mood pretty often, as we knew that our teacher could never assume the *imperative* on this subject.

The fact is, neither we nor the teacher entered into the writer's meaning. The general plan of the work was not surveyed, nor the particular sense of separate passages examined. We could not do it, perhaps, from the want of maturity of mind; the teacher did not, because he had never been accustomed to any thing of the kind in his own education; and it never occurred to him that he could deviate from the track, or improve upon the methods of those who taught him. Pope's Essay on Man was the parsing manual used by the most advanced. No wonder, then, that pupil and pedagogue so often got bewildered and lost in a world of thought like this; for, however well ordered a creation it might be, it was scarcely better than a chaos to them.

In closing, I ought to remark, that all our teachers were not thus ignorant of grammar, although

they did not perhaps take the best way to teach it. In speaking thus of this department of study, and also of others, I have reference to the more general character of schoolmasters and schools.

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CHAPTER IX.

THE PARTICULAR MASTER—VARIOUS METHODS OF PUNISHMENT.

I HAVE given some account of my first winter at school. Of my second, third, and fourth, I have nothing of importance to say. The routine was the same in each. The teachers were remarkable for nothing in particular: if they were, I have too indistinct a remembrance of their characters to portray them now; so I will pass them by, and describe the teacher of my fifth.

He was called the *particular* master. The scholars in speaking of him, would say, "He is so particular." The first morning of the school, he read us a long list of regulations to be observed in school, and out. "There are more rules than you could shake a stick at before your arm would ache," said some one. "And if the master should shake a stick at every one who should disobey them, he would not find time to do much else," said another. Indeed, it proved to be so. Half the time was spent in calling up scholars for little misdemeanors, trying to make them confess their faults, and promise stricter obedience, or in devising punishments and inflicting them. Almost every meth-

od was tried that was ever suggested to the brain of pedagogue. Some were feruled on the hand ; some were whipped with a rod on the back ; some were compelled to hold out, at arm's length, the largest book which could be found, or a great leaden inkstand, till muscle and nerve, bone and marrow, were tortured with the continued exertion. If the arm bent or inclined from the horizontal level, it was forced back again by a knock of the ruler on the elbow. I well recollect that one poor fellow forgot his suffering by fainting quite away. This lingering punishment was more befitting the vengeance of a savage, than the corrective efforts of a teacher of the young in civilized life.

He had recourse to another method, almost, perhaps quite, as barbarous. It was standing in a stooping posture, with the finger on the head of a nail in the floor. It was a position not particularly favorable to health of body or soundness of mind ; the head being brought about as low as the knees, the blood rushing to it, and pressing unnaturally on the veins, often caused a dull pain, and a staggering dizziness. That man's judgment or mercy must have been topsy-turvy also, who first set the example of such an infliction on those whose progress in knowledge depended somewhat on their being kept right end upward.

The above punishments were sometimes rendered doubly painful by their taking place directly in front of the enormous fire, so that the pitiable culprit was roasted as well as racked. Another mode

of punishment—an anti-whispering process—was setting the jaws at a painful distance apart, by inserting a chip perpendicularly between the teeth. Then we occasionally had our hair pulled, our noses tweaked, our ears pinched and boxed, or snapped, perhaps, with India-rubber; this last the perfection of ear-tingling operations. There were minor penalties, moreover, for minor faults. The uneasy urchins were clapped into the closet, thrust under the desk, or perched on its top. Boys were made to sit in the girls' seats, amusing the school with their grinning awkwardness; and girls were obliged to sit on the masculine side of the aisle, with crimsoned necks, and faces buried in their aprons.

But I have dwelt long enough on the various penalties of the numerous violations of Master Particular's many orders. After all, he did not keep an orderly school. The cause of the mischief was, he was variable. He wanted that persevering firmness and uniformity which alone can insure success. He had so many regulations, that he could not stop at all times to notice the transgressions of them. The scholars, not knowing with certainty what to expect, dared to run the risk of disobedience. The consequence of this procedure on the part of the ruler and the ruled was, that the school became uncommonly riotous before the close of the season. The larger scholars soon broke over all restraint; but the little ones were narrowly watched and restricted somewhat longer. But these gradu-

ally grew unmindful of the unstable authority, and finally contemned it with almost insolent effrontery, unless the master's temper-kindled eye was fixed directly and menacingly upon them. Thus the many regulations were like so many cobwebs, through which the great flies would break at once, and so tear and disorder the net that it would not hold even the little ones, or at all answer the purpose for which it was spun.

I would not have it understood that this master was singular in his punishments; for such methods of correcting offenders have been in use time out of mind. He was distinguished only for resorting to them more frequently than any other instructor within my own observation. The truth is, that it seemed to be the prevailing opinion both among teachers and parents, that boys and girls *would* play and be mischievous at any rate, and that consequently masters *must* punish in some way or other. It was a matter of course; nothing better was expected.

CHAPTER X.

HOW THEY USED TO READ IN THE OLD SCHOOL-HOUSE
IN DISTRICT NO. V.

IN this description of the District School, as it *was*, that frequent and important exercise, Reading, must not be omitted,—Reading as it *was*. Advance, then, ye readers of the Old School-house, and let us witness your performances.

We will suppose it is the first day of the school. "Come and read," says the mistress to a little flaxen headed creature of doubtful gender; for the child is in petticoats, and sits on the female side, as close as possible to a guardian sister. But then those coarser features, tanned complexion, and close-clipped hair, with other minutiae of aspect, are somewhat contradictory to the feminine dress. "Come and read." It is the first time that this he or she was ever inside of a school-house, and in the presence of a school-ma'am, according to recollection, and the order is heard with shrinking timidity. But the sister whispers an encouraging word, and helps "tot" down from the seat, who creeps out into the aisle, and hesitates along down to the teacher, biting his fingers, or scratching his head, perhaps both, to relieve the embarrassment of the

novel situation. "What is your name, dear?" "*Tholomon Icherthon*," lisps the now-discovered he, in a phlegm-choked voice, scarce above a whisper. "Put your hands down by your side, Solomon, and make a bow." He obeys, if a short and hasty jerk of the head is a bow. The alphabetical page of the spelling-book is presented, and he is asked, "What's that?" But he cannot tell. He is but two years and a half old, and has been sent to school to relieve his mother from trouble, rather than to learn. No one at home has yet shown or named a letter to him. He has never had even that celebrated character, round O, pointed out to his notice. It was an older beginner, most probably, who, being asked a similar question about the first letter of the alphabet, replied, "I know him by sight, but can't tell him by name." But our namesake of the wise man does not know the gentleman even by sight, nor any of his twenty-five companions.

Solomon Richardson has at length said A, B, C, for the first time in his life. He has *read*. "That's a nice boy; make another bow, and go to your seat." He gives another jerk of the head, and whirls on his heel, and trots back to his seat, meeting the congratulatory smile of his sister with a satisfied grin, which, put into language would be, "There, I've read, ha'nt I?"

The little chit, at first so timid, and almost inaudible in enunciation, in a few days becomes accustomed to the place and the exercise; and, in

obedience to the "Speak up loud, that's a good boy," he soon pipes off *A-er, B-er, C-er, &c.*, with a far-ringing shrillness, that vies even with chancleer himself. Solomon went all the pleasant days of the first summer, and nearly every day of the next, before he knew all the letters by sight, or could call them by name. Strange that it should take so long to become acquainted with these twenty-six characters, when, in a month's time, the same child becomes familiar with the forms and the names of hundreds of objects in nature around, or in use about his father's house, shop, or farm! Not so very strange either, if we only reflect a moment. Take a child into a party of twenty-six persons, all strangers, and lead him from one to the other as fast as his little feet can patter, telling him their respective names, all in less than ten minutes; do this four times a day even, and you would not be surprised if he should be weeks at least, if not months, in learning to designate them all by their names. Is it any matter of surprise, then, that the child should be so long in becoming acquainted with the alphabetical party, when he is introduced to them precisely in the manner above described? Then, these are not of different heights, complexions, dresses, motions, and tones of voice, as a living company have. But there they stand in an unalterable line, all in the same complexions and dress; all just so tall, just so motionless and mute and uninteresting, and, of course, the most unrememberable figures in the world. No wonder that some

should go to school, and "sit on a bench, and say A B C," as a little girl said, for a whole year, and still find themselves strangers to some of the sable company, even then. Our little reader is permitted at length to turn a leaf, and he finds himself in the region of the Abs,—an expanse of little syllables, making me, who am given to comparisons, think of an extensive plain whereon there is no tree or shrub or plant, or anything else inviting to the eye, and nothing but little stones, stones, stones, all about the same size. And what must the poor little learner do here? Why, he must hop from cobble to cobble, if I may so call *ab*, *eb*, *ib*, as fast as he possibly can, naming each one, after the voice of the teacher, as he hurries along. And this must be kept up until he can denominate each lifeless and uninteresting object on the face of the desert.

After more or less months, the weary novice ceases to be an Ab-ite. He is next put into whole words of one syllable, arranged in columns. The first word we read in Perry that conveyed anything like an idea, was the first one in the first column,—the word *ache*: ay, we did not easily forget what this meant, when once informed; the corresponding idea, or rather feeling, was so often in our consciousness. *Ache*,—a very appropriate term with which to begin a course of education so abounding in pains of body and of mind.

After five pages of this perpendicular reading, if I may so call it, we entered on the horizontal, that is, on words arranged in sentences and paragraphs.

This was reading in good earnest, as grown-up folks did, and something with which tiny childhood would be very naturally puffed up. "Easy Lessons" was the title of about a dozen separate chapters, scattered at intervals among the numerous spelling columns, like brambly openings here and there amid the tall forest. Easy lessons, because they consisted mostly of little monosyllabic words, easy to be pronounced. But they were not easy as it regards being understood. They were made up of abstract moral sentences, presenting but a very faint meaning to the child, if any at all. Their particular application to his own conduct he would not perceive, of course, without help; and this it scarcely ever entered the head or the heart of the teacher to afford.

In the course of summers, how many I forget, we arrived at the most manly and dignified reading the illustrious Perry had prepared for us. It was entitled "Moral Tales and Fables." In these latter, beasts and birds talked like men; and strange sort of folks, called Jupiter, Mercury, and Juno, were pictured as sitting up in the clouds, and talking with men and animals on earth, or as down among them doing very unearthly things. To quote language in common use, we *kind o' believed it all to be true, and yet we kind o' didn't*. As for the "moral" at the end, teachers never dreamed of attracting our attention to it. Indeed, we had no other idea of all these Easy Lessons, Tales, and Fables, than that they were to be syllabled from

the tongue in the task of reading. That they were to sink into the heart, and make us better in life, never occurred to our simple understandings.

Among all the rest were five pieces of poetry,—charming stuff to read; the words would come along one after another so easily, and the lines would jingle so pleasantly together at the end, tickling the ear like two beads in a rattle. “Oh! give us poetry to read, of all things,” we thought.

We generally passed directly from the spelling-book to the reading-book of the first class, although we were ranked the second class still. Or perhaps we took a book which had been formerly used by the first class; for a new reading-book was generally introduced once in a few years in compliance with the earnest recommendation of the temporary teacher. While the first class were in Scott’s Lessons, we of the second were pursuing their tracks, not altogether understandingly, through Adams’s Understanding Reader. When a new master persuaded them into Murray, then we were admitted into Scott.

The principal requisites in reading, in these days, were to read fast, mind the “stops and marks,” and speak up loud. As for suiting the tone to the meaning, no such thing was dreamed of, in our school at least. As much emphasis was laid on an insignificant *of* or *and* as on the most important word in the piece. But no wonder we did not know how to vary our tones, for we did not always know the meaning of the words, or enter into the general

spirit of the composition. This was very frequently, indeed almost always, the case with the majority even of the first class. Parliamentary prose and Miltonic verse were just about as good as Greek for the purpose of modulating the voice according to meaning. It scarcely ever entered the heads of our teachers to question us about the ideas hidden in the great, long words and spacious sentences. It is possible that they did not always discover it themselves. "Speak up there, and not read like a mouse in a cheese; and mind your stops,"—such were the principal directions respecting the important art of elocution. Important it was most certainly considered; for each class must read twice in the forenoon, and the same in the afternoon, from a quarter to half an hour each time, according to the size of the class. Had they read but once or twice, and but little at a time, and this with nice and very profitable attention to tone and sense, parents would have thought the master most miserably deficient in duty, and their children cheated out of their rights, notwithstanding the time thus saved should be most assiduously devoted to other all-important branches of education.

It ought not to be omitted, that the Bible, particularly the New Testament, was the reading twice a day, generally, for all the classes adequate to words of more than one syllable. It was the only reading of several of the younger classes under some teachers. On this practice I shall make but a single remark. As far as my own experience and

observation extended, reverence for the sacred volume was not deepened by this constant but exceedingly careless use.

But what a long and perhaps tedious chapter on this subject of reading! I had no idea of it when I began. Yet I have not put down the half that I could. These early impressions, when once started from their recesses, how they will teem forth!

CHAPTER XI.

HOW THEY USED TO SPELL.

THERE, the class have read; but they have something else to do before they take their seats. "Shut your books," says he who has been hearing them read. What makes this row of little countenances brighten up so suddenly, especially the upper end of it? What wooden faces and leaden eyes, two minutes ago! The reading was nothing to them,—those select sentences and maxims in Perry's spelling-book which are tucked in between the fables. It is all as dull as a dirge to those life-loving boys and girls. They almost drowsed while they stood up in their places. But they are fully awake now. They are going to spell. But this in itself is the driest exercise to prepare for, and the driest to perform, of the whole round. The child cares no more in his heart about the arrangement of vowels and consonants in the orthography of words, than he does how many chips lie one above another at the school-house wood-pile. But he does care, whether he is at the head or foot of his class; whether the money dangles from his own neck or another's. This is the secret of the interest in spelling. Emulation

is awakened, ambition roused. There is something like the tug of strength in the wrestle, something of the alternation of hope and fear in a game of chance. There has been a special preparation for the trial. Observe this class any day, half an hour before they are called up to read. What a flitting from top to bottom of the spelling column, and what a flutter of lips and hissing of utterance! Now the eye twinkles on the page to catch a word, and now it is fixed on the empty air, while the orthography is syllabled over and over again in mind, until at length it is syllabled on the memory. But the time of trial has come; they have only to read first. "The third class may come and read." "O dear, I haven't got my spelling lesson," mutters Charlotte to herself. She has just begun the art of writing this winter, and she lingered a little too long at her hooks and trammels. The lesson seems to her to have as many again hard words in it as common. What a flutter she is in! She got up above George in the forenoon, and she would not get down again for any thing. She is as slow in coming from her seat as she possibly can be and keep moving. She makes a chink in her book with her finger, and every now and then, during the reading exercise, steals a glance at a difficult word.

But the reading is over, and what a brightening up, as was said before, with the exception, perhaps, of two or three idle or stupid boys at that less honorable extremity of the class called the foot! That boy at the head—no, it *was* a boy; but Harriet has

at length got above him ; and, when girls once get to the head, get them away from it if you can. Once put the "pride of place" into their hearts, and how they will queen it ! Then they are more sensitive regarding any thing that might lower them in the eyes of others, and seem the least like disgrace. I have known a little girl to cry the half of one day, and look melancholy the whole of the next, on losing her place at the head. Girls are more likely to arrive at and keep the first place in the class, in consequence of a little more help from mother nature than boys get. I believe that they generally have a memory more fitted for catching and holding words and other signs addressed to the eye, than the other sex. That girl at the head has studied her spelling lesson, until she is as confident of every word as the unerring Perry himself. She can spell every word in the column, in the order it stands, without the master's "putting it out," she has been over it so many times. "Now, Mr. James, get up again if you can," thinks Harriet. I pity you, poor girl ; for James has an ally that will blow over your proud castle in the air. Old Boreas, the king of the winds, will order out a snow-storm by and by, to block up the roads, so that none but booted and weather-proof males can get to school ; and you, Miss, must lose a day or two, and then find yourself at the foot with those blockhead boys who always abide there. But let it not be thought that all those foot lads are deficient in intellect. Look at them when the master's back

is turned, and you will see mischievous ingenuity enough to convince you that they might surpass even James and Harriet, had some other faculties been called into exercise besides the mere memory of verbalities.

The most extraordinary spelling, and indeed reading machine, in our school, was a boy whom I shall call Memorus Wordwell. He was mighty and wonderful in the acquisition and remembrance of words,—of signs without the ideas signified. The alphabet he acquired at home before he was two years old. What exultation of parents, what exclamation from admiring visitors! "There was never any thing like it." He had almost accomplished his Abs before he was thought old enough for school. At an earlier age than usual, however, he was sent; and then he went from *Ache* to *Abomination* in half the summers and winters it took the rest of us to go over the same space. Astonishing how quickly he mastered column after column, section after section, of obstinate orthographies. Those martial terms I have just used, together with our hero's celerity, put me in mind of Cæsar. So I will quote him. Memorus might have said in respect to the host of the spelling-book, "I came, I saw, I conquered." He generally stood at the head of a class, each one of whom was two years his elder. Poor creatures! they studied hard, some of them, but it did no good: Memorus Wordwell was born to be above them, as some men are said to have been "born to command." At the public

examination of his first winter, the people of the district, and even the minister, thought it marvellous that such monstrous great words should be mastered by "such a leetle mite of a boy!" Memorums was mighty also in saying those after spelling matters—the Key, the Abbreviations, the Punctuation, &c. These things were deemed of great account to be laid up in remembrance, although they were all very imperfectly understood, and some of them not understood at all.

Punctuation—how many hours, days, and even weeks, have I tugged away to lift, as it were, to roll up into the store-house of my memory, the many long, heavy sentences comprehended under this title! Only survey (we use this word when speaking of considerable space and bulk)—only survey the first sentence, a transcript of which I will endeavor to locate in these narrow bounds. I would have my readers of the rising generation know what mighty labors we little creatures of five, six, and seven years old were set to perform:—

"Punctuation is the art of pointing, or of dividing a discourse into periods by points, expressing the pauses to be made in the reading thereof, and regulating the cadence or elevation of the voice."

There, I have labored weeks on that; for I always had the lamentable defect of mind not to be able to commit to memory what I did not understand. My teachers never aided me with the least explanation of the above-copied sentence, nor of

other reading of a similar character, which was likewise to be committed to memory. But this and all was nothing, as it were, to Memorus Wordwell. He was a very Hercules in this wilderness of words.

Master Wordwell was a remarkable reader too. He could rattle off a word as extensive as the name of a Russian noble, when he was but five years old, as easily as the schoolmaster himself. "He can read in the hardest chapters of the Testament as fast agin as I can," said his mother. "I never did see nothin beat it," exclaimed his father; "he speaks up as loud as a minister." But I have said enough about this prodigy. I have said thus much, because, although he was thought so surpassingly bright, he was the most decided ninny in the school. The fact is, he did not know what the sounds he uttered meant. It never entered his head, nor the heads of his parents and most of his teachers, that words and sentences were written, and should be read, only to be understood. He lost some of his reputation, however, when he grew up towards twenty-one, and it was found that *numbers*, in more senses than one, were far above him in arithmetic.

One little anecdote about Memorus Wordwell before we let him go, and this long chapter shall be no longer.

It happened one day that the "cut and split" for the fire fell short, and Jonas Patch was out wielding the axe in school time. He had been at

work about half an hour, when Memorus, who was perceived to have less to do than the rest, was sent out to take his place. He was about ten years old, and four years younger than Jonas. "Memorus, you may go out and spell Jonas." Our hero did not think of the Yankee sense in which the master used the word *spell*: indeed he had never attached but one meaning to it, whenever it was used with reference to himself. He supposed the master was granting him a ride extraordinary on his favorite hobby. So he put his spelling-book under his arm, and was out at the wood-pile with the speed of a boy rushing to play.

"Ye got yer spellin lesson, Jonas?" was his first salutation. "Have n't looked at it yit," was the reply. "I mean to cut up this plaguy great log, spellin or no spellin, before I go in. I had as lieve keep warm here choppin wood, as freeze up there in that tarnal cold back seat." "Well, the master sent me out to hear you spell." "Did he? well, put out the words, and I'll spell." Memorus being so distinguished a speller, Jonas did not doubt but that he was really sent out on this errand. So our deputy spelling-master mounted the top of the wood-pile, just in front of Jonas, to put out words to his temporary pupil, who still kept on putting out chips.

"Do you know where the lesson begins, Jonas?" "No, I don't; but I 'spose I shall find out now." "Well, here 'tis." (They both belonged to the same class.) "Spell A-bom-i-na-tion." Jonas spells.

A-b-o-m bom a-bom (in the mean time up goes the axe high in air), i a-bom-i (down it goes again chuck into the wood) n-a na a-bom-i-na (up it goes again) t-i-o-n tion, a-bom-i-na-tion; chuck the axe goes again, and at the same time out flies a furious chip, and hits Memorus on the nose. At this moment the master appeared just at the corner of the school-house, with one foot still on the threshold. "Jonas, why don't you come in? didn't I send Memorus out to spell you?" "Yes, sir, and he has been spelling me; how could I come in if he spelt me here?" At this the master's eye caught Memorus perched up on the top-stick, with his book open upon his lap, rubbing his nose, and just in the act of putting out the next word of the column. Ac-com-mo-da-tion, pronounced Memorus in a broken but louder voice than before; for he had caught a glimpse of the master, and he wished to let him know that he was doing his duty. This was too much for the master's gravity. He perceived the mistake, and, without saying more, wheeled back into the school-room, almost bursting with the most tumultuous laugh he ever tried to suppress. The scholars wondered at his looks, and grinned in sympathy. But in a few minutes Jonas came in, followed by Memorus with his spelling-book, who exclaimed, "I have heard him spell clean through the whole lesson, and he didn't spell hardly none of 'em right." The master could hold in no longer, and the scholars perceived the blunder, and there was one simultaneous roar from pedagogue and

pupils; the scholars laughing twice as loud and uproarously in consequence of being permitted to laugh in school-time, and to do it with the accompaniment of the master.

CHAPTER XII.

MR. SPOUTSOUND, THE SPEAKING MASTER—THE EXHIBITION.

Now comes winter the sixth, of my district education. Our master was as insignificant a personage as is often met with beyond the age of twenty-one. He ought to have been pedagogue in that land of littleness, Lilliput. Our great fellows of the back seat might have tossed him out of the window from the palm of the hand. But he possessed certain qualifications, and pursued such a course that he was permitted to retain the magisterial seat through his term, and indeed was quite popular on the whole.

He was as remarkable for the loudness and compass of his voice, as for the diminutiveness of his material dimensions. How such a body of sound could proceed from so bodiless an existence, was a marvel. It seemed as unnatural as that a tremendous thunder-clap should burst from a speck of cloud in the sky. He generally sat with the singers on the Sabbath, and drowned the feeble voices with the inundation of his bass.

But it was not with his tuneful powers alone, that he "astonished the natives." He was imagined

to possess great gifts of oratory likewise. "What a pity it is that he had not been a minister!" was said. It was by his endowments and taste in this respect that he made himself particularly memorable in our school. Mr. Spoutsound had been one quarter, to an academy where declamation was a weekly exercise. Finding in this, ample scope for his vocal extraordinariness (a long-winded word, to be sure, but so appropriate), he became an enthusiastic votary to the Ciceronian art. The principal qualification of an orator in his view, was height, depth, and breadth of utterance,—quantity of sound. Of course, he fancied himself a very lion in oratory. Indeed, as far as roaring would go, he was a lion. This gentleman introduced declamation, or the speaking of pieces, as it was called, into our school. He considered "speaking of the utmost consequence in this country, as any boy might be called to a seat in the legislature, perhaps, in the course of things." It was a novelty to the scholars, and they entered with their whole souls into the matter. It was a pleasant relief to the dullness of the old-fashioned routine.

What a rummaging of books, pamphlets, and newspapers now took place, to find pieces to speak! The American Preceptor, the Columbian Orator, the Art of Reading, Scott's Elocution, Webster's Third Part, and I know not how many other ancients, were taken down from their dusty retirement at home, for the sake of the specimens of eloquence they afforded. Those pieces were

deemed best by us grandsons of the Revolutionists, which most abounded in those glorious words, Freedom, Liberty, Independence, and other spirit-kindling names and phrases, that might be mentioned. Another recommendation was high-flown language, and especially words that were long and sonorous, such as would roll thunderingly from the tongue. For, like our district professor, we had the impression that noise was the most important quality in eloquence. The first, the second, and the third requisite was the same; it was noise, noise, noise. Action, however, or gesticulation, was not omitted. This was considered the next qualification of a good orator. So there was the most vehement swinging of arms, shaking of fists, and waving of palms. That occasional motion of the limb and force of voice, called emphasis, was not a characteristic of our eloquence, or rather it was all emphasis. Our utterance was something like the continuous roar of a swollen brook over a mill-dam, and our action like the unintermitted whirling and clapping of adjacent machinery.

We tried our talent in the dramatic way likewise. There were numerous extracts from dramatic compositions scattered through the various reading books we had mustered. These dialogistic performances were even more interesting than our speechifying in the semblance of lawyers and legislators. We more easily acquired an aptitude for this exercise, as it was somewhat like that every-day affair, conversation. In this we were brought face to face,

voice to voice, with each other, and our social sympathies were kindled into glow. We talked with, as well as at, folks. Then the female portion of the school could take a part in the performance; and who does not know that dialoguing, as well as dancing, has twice the zest with a female partner? The whole school, with the exception of the very least perhaps, were engaged, indeed absorbed, in this novel branch of education introduced by Mr. Spout-sound. Some, who had not got out of their Abs, were taught, by admiring fathers and mothers at home, little pieces by rote, and made to screech them out with most ear-splitting execution. One lad in this way committed to memory that famous piece of self-puffery beginning with the lines,—

“You’d scarce expect one of my age
To speak in public on the stage.”

Memorus Wordwell committed to memory and parroted forth that famous speech of Pitt, in which he so eloquently replies to the charge of being a young man.

Cicero at Athens was not more assiduous in seeking the “immense and the infinite” in eloquence, than we were in seeking the great in speaking. Besides half an hour of daily school-time set apart for the exercise, under the immediate direction and exemplification of the master, our noonings were devoted to the same, as far as the young’s ruling passion, the love of play, would

permit. And on the way to and from school, the pleasure of dialogue would compete with that of dousing each other into the snow. We even "spoke" while doing our night and morning work at home. A boy might be seen at the wood-pile hacking at a log and a dialogue by turns. Or perhaps, after dispensing the fodder to the tenants of the barn, he would mount a half-cleared scaffold, and out-bellow the wondering beeves below.

As the school drew towards a close, Mr. Spout-sound proposed to have an exhibition in addition to the usual examination, on the last day, or rather the evening of it. Our oratorical gifts and accomplishments must be publicly displayed; which is next to publicly using them in the important affairs of the town, the state, or the country.

"An exhibition!—I want to know! can it be?" There had never been anything like it in the district before, nor indeed in the town. Such a thing had scarcely been heard of, except by some one whose uncle or cousin had been to the academy or to college. The people of the district were wide awake. The younger portion of them could hardly sleep nights.

The scholars are requested to select the pieces they would prefer to speak, whether speeches or dialogues; and to arrange among themselves who should be fellow-partners in the dramatical performances. The master, however, retained the right of veto on their choice. Now, what a rustle

of leaves and flutter of lips in school-hours, and noisier flapping of books and clatter of tongues at noon, in settling who shall have which, and who speak with whom. At length all is arranged, and mostly to the minds of all. Then, for a week or two before the final consummation of things eloquent, it was nothing but rehearsal. No pains were spared by any one that he might be perfect in the recollection and flourishing-off of his part. Dialoguists were grouped together in every corner. There was a buzz in the back seat, a hum in the closet, a screech in the entry, and the very climax of vociferation in the spelling-floor. Here the solos (if I may borrow a term from music) were rehearsed under the immediate criticism of Mr. Spoutsound, whose chief delight was in forensic and parliamentary eloquence. The old school-house was a little Babel in the confusion of tongues.

The expected day at length arrives. There must be, of course, the usual examination in the afternoon. But nobody attended this but the minister, and the committee who engaged the master. The people of the district all intended to be at the exhibition in the evening, and examination was "just nothing at all" with that in prospect. And, in fact, it *was* just nothing at all; for the "ruling passion" had swallowed up very much of the time that should have been devoted to the really important branches of education.

After the finishing of the school, a stage was erected at the end of the spelling-floor, next to the

desk and the closet. It was hung round with checked bed-blankets, in the semblance of theatrical curtains, to conceal any preparations that might be necessary between the pieces.

The exhibition was to commence at half past six. Before that time, the old school-house was crowded to the utmost of its capacity for containing, by the people not only of our district, but of other parts of the town. The children were wedged into chinks too narrow for the admission of the grown-up. Never were a multitude of living bodies more completely compressed and amalgamated into one continuous mass.

On the front writing-bench, just before the stage, and facing the audience, sat the four first, and some of the most interesting performers on the occasion, viz.; players on the clarionet, violin, bass-viol, and bassoon. But they of the bow were sorely troubled at first. Time and space go together with them, you know. They cannot keep the first without possessing the latter. As they sat, their semibreves were all shortened into minims, indeed into crotchets, for lack of elbow-room. At length the violinist stood up straight on the writing-bench, so as to have an unimpeded stretch in the empty air, above the thicket of heads. His fellow-sufferer then contrived to stand so that his long bow could sweep freely between the steady heads of two broad-shouldered men, out of danger from joggling boys. This band discoursed what was to our ears most eloquent music, as a prelude to the musical elo-

quence which was to be the chief entertainment of the occasion. They played intermediately also, and gave the winding-off flourish of sound.

At forty minutes past six, the curtain rose ; that is, the bed-blankets were pulled aside. There stood Mr. Spoutsound on the stage, in all the pomp possible to diminutiveness. He advanced two steps, and bowed as profoundly from height to depth as his brevity of stature would admit. He then opened the exhibition by speaking a poetical piece called a Prologue, which he found in one of the old reading-books. As this was originally composed as an introduction to a stage performance, it was thought appropriate on this occasion. Mr. Spoutsound now put forth in all the plenitude of his utterance. It seemed a vocal cataract, all torrent, thunder, and froth. But it wanted room,—an abyss to empty into ; and all it had was the remnant of space left in our little school-room. A few of the audience were overwhelmed with the pour and rush and roar of the pent-up noise, and the rest with admiration, yea, astonishment, that the schoolmaster “*could speak so.*”

He ceased—it was all as still as if every other voice had died of envy. He bowed—there was then a general breathing, as if the vocals were just coming to life again. He sat down on a chair placed on the stage ; then there was one general buzz, above which arose, here and there, a living and loud voice. Above this, soon arose the exaltation of the orator’s favorite march ; for he deemed

it proper that his own performance should be separated from those of his pupils by some length and loftiness of music.

Now the exhibition commenced in good earnest. The dramatists dressed in costumes according to the character to be sustained, as far as all the old and odd dresses that could be mustered up would enable them to do so. The district, and indeed the town, had been ransacked for revolutionary coats and cocked-up hats and other grand-fatherly and grand-motherly attire.

The people present were quite as much amused with the spectacle as with the speaking. To see the old fashions on the young folks, and to see the young folks personating characters so entirely opposite to their own ; for instance, the slim, pale-faced youth, by the aid of stuffing, looking, and acting the fat old wine-bibber ; the blooming girl of seventeen, putting on the cap, the kerchief, and the character of seventy-five, &c.—all this was ludicrously strange. A very refined taste might have observed other things that were strangely ludicrous in the elocution and gesticulation of these disciples of Mr. Spoutsound ; but most of the company present were so fortunate as to perceive no bad taste to mar their enjoyment.

The little boy of five spoke the little piece—

“You’d scarce expect one of my age,” &c.

I recollect another line of the piece which has become singularly verified in the history of the lad.

It is this—

“Tall oaks from little acorns grow.”

Now, this acorn of eloquence, which sprouted forth so vigorously on this occasion, has at length grown into a mighty oak of oratory on his native hills. He has flourished in a Fourth of July oration before his fellow-townsmen.

Memorus Wordwell, who at this time was eleven years old, yelled forth the aforementioned speech of Pitt. In the part replying to the taunt that the author of the speech was a young man, Memorus “beat all.” Next to the master himself, he excited the greatest admiration, and particularly in his father and mother.

But this chapter must be ended, so we will skip to the end of this famous exhibition. At a quarter past ten, the curtain dropped for the last time; that is, the bed-blankets were pulled down and put into the sleighs of their owners, to be carried home to be spread over the dreamers of acts, instead of being hung before the actors of dreams. The little boys and girls did not get to bed till eleven o’clock that night, nor all of them to sleep till twelve. They were never more the pupils of Mr. Spoutsound. He soon migrated to one of the States beyond the Alleghany. There he studied law not more than a year certainly, and was admitted to the Bar. It is rumored that he soon *spoke* himself into the legislature, and as soon spoke himself out again. Whether he will speak himself into Congress is a

matter of exceeding doubt. I have nothing more to add respecting the speaking master, or the speaking, excepting that one shrewd old man was heard to say on leaving the school-house, exhibition night, "A great *cry*, but little wool."

CHAPTER XIII.

LEARNING TO WRITE.

THE winter I was nine years old, I made another advance toward the top of the ladder, in the circumstance of learning to write. I desired and pleaded to commence the chirographical art the summer, and indeed the winter before ; for others of my own age were at it thus early. But my father said that my fingers were hardly stout enough to manage a quill from his geese ; but that, if I would put up with the quill of a hen, I might try. This pithy satire put an end to my teasing.

Having previously had the promise of writing this winter, I had made all the necessary preparations, days before school was to begin. I had bought me a new birch ruler, and had given a third of my wealth, four cents, for it. To this I had appended, by a well-twisted flaxen string, a plummet of my own running, whittling, and scraping. I had hunted up an old pewter inkstand, which had come down from the ancestral eminence of my great grandfather, for aught I know ; and it bore many marks of a speedier and less honorable descent, to wit, from table or desk to the floor. I had succeeded in becoming the owner of a pen-

knife, not that it was likely to be applied to its appropriate use that winter at least; for such beginners generally used the instrument to mar that kind of pens they wrote in, rather than to make or mend those they wrote with. I had selected one of the fairest quills out of an enormous bunch. Half a quire of foolscap had been folded into the shape of a writing-book by the maternal hand, and covered with brown paper, nearly as thick as a sheepskin.

Behold me now, on the first Monday in December, starting for school, with my new and clean writing-book buttoned under my jacket, my inkstand in my pocket, a bundle of necessary books in one hand, and my ruler and swinging plummet in the other, which I flourished in the air and around my head, till the sharpened lead made its first mark on my own face. My long white-feathered goose-quill was twisted into my hat-band, like a plummy badge of the distinction to which I had arrived, and the important enterprise before me.

On arriving at the school-house, I took a seat higher up and more honorable than the one I occupied the winter before. At the proper time, my writing-book, which, with my quill, I had handed to the master on entering, was returned to me, with a copy set, and paper ruled and pen made. My copy was a single straight mark, at the first corner of my manuscript. "A straight mark! who could not make so simple a thing as that?" thought I. I waited, however, to see how the boy next to me, a beginner also, should succeed, as he had got ready

a moment before me. Never shall I forget the first chirographical exploit of this youth. That inky image will never be eradicated from my memory, so long as a single trace of early experience is left on its tablet. The fact is, it was an epoch in my life : something great was to be done, and my attention was intensely awake to whatever had a bearing on this new and important trial of my powers. I looked to see a mark as straight as a ruler, having its four corners as distinctly defined as the angles of a parallelogram.

But, O me ! what a spectacle ! What a shocking contrast to my anticipation ! That mark had as many crooks as a ribbon in the wind, and nearer eight angles than four ; and its two sides were nearly as rough and as notched as a fine handsaw ; and, indeed, the mark somewhat resembled it in width, for the fellow had laid in a store of ink sufficient to last the journey of the whole line. "Shame on him !" said I, internally, "I can beat that, I know." I began by setting my pen firmly on the paper, and I brought a mark half-way down with rectilinear precision. But by this time my head began to swim, and my hand to tremble. I was as it were in vacancy, far below the upper ruling, and as far above the lower. My self-possession failed ; my pen diverged to the right, then to the left, crooking all the remainder of its way, with as many zig-zags as could well be in so short a distance. Mine was as sad a failure as my neighbor's. I covered it over with my fingers, and did

not jog him with a "see there," as I had vainly anticipated.

So much for pains-taking, now for chance. By good luck the next effort was quite successful. I now dashed on, for better or worse, till in one half-hour I had covered the whole page with the standing, though seemingly falling, monuments of the chirographical wisdom of my teacher, and skill of myself. In the afternoon a similar copy was set, and I dashed on again as if I had taken so much writing by the job, and my only object was to save time. Now and then there was quite a reputable mark; but alas—for him whose perception of the beautiful was particularly delicate, should he get a glimpse of these sloughs of ink!

The third morning, my copy was the first element of the *m* and *n*, or what in burlesque is called a hook. On my fourth, I had the last half of the same letters, or the trammel; and indeed they were the similitudes of hooks and trammels, forged in a country plenteous in iron, and by the youngest apprentice at the hammer and anvil.

In this way I went through all the small letters, as they are called. First, the elements or constituent parts, then the whole character in which these parts were combined.

Then I must learn to make the capitals, before entering on joining hand. Four pages were devoted to these. Capital letters! They were capital offences against all that is graceful, indeed decent, yea tolerable, in that art which is so capable of beautiful forms and proportions.

I came next to joining hand, about three weeks after my commencement; and joining hand indeed it was! It seemed as if my hooks and trammels were overheated in the forge, and were melted into each other; the shapeless masses so clung together at points where they ought to have been separate, so very far were they from all resemblance to conjoined, yet distinct and well-defined characters.

Thus I went on, a perfect little prodigal in the expenditure of paper, ink, pens and time. The first winter, I splashed two, and the next, three writing-books with inky puddle, in learning coarse hand; and, after all, I had gained not much in penmanship, except a workmanlike assurance and celerity of execution, such as is natural to an old hand at the business.

The third winter, I commenced small hand, or rather fine, as it is more technically denominated; or rather a copy of half-way dimensions, that the change to fine running-hand might not be too sudden. From this dwarfish course, or giant fine hand,—just as you please to call it,—I slid down to the genuine epistolary and mercantile, with a capital at the head of the line, as much out of proportion as a corpulent old captain marching in single file before a parade of little boys.

Some of our teachers were accustomed to spend a few minutes, forenoon and afternoon, in going round among the writers to see that they held the pen properly, and took a decent degree of pains. But the majority of them, according to present rec-

ollections, never stirred from the desk to superintend this branch. There was something like an excuse, however, for not visiting their pupils while at the pen. Sitting as they did in those long, narrow, rickety seats, one could hardly be got at without joggling two or three others, displacing a writing-book, knocking over an inkstand, and making a deal of rustle, rattle, and racket.

Some of the teachers set the copies at home in the evening, but most set them in school. Six hours per day were all that custom required of a teacher : of course, half an hour at home spent in the matters of the school would have been time and labor not paid for, and a gratuity not particularly expected. On entering in the morning, and looking for the master as the object at which to make the customary "manners," we could perceive just the crown of his head beyond a huge stack of manuscripts, which, together with his copy-setting attention, prevented the bowed and courtesied respects from his notice. A few of the most advanced in penmanship had copper-plate slips, as they were called, tucked into their manuscripts, for the trial of their more skillful hands ; or, if an ordinary learner had for once done extraordinarily well, he was permitted a slip as a mark of merit, and a circumstance of encouragement. Sometimes, when the master was pressed for time, all the joining-handers were thus furnished. It was a pleasure to have copies of this sort ; their polished shades, graceful curves, and delicate hair lines, were so like a picture for the

eye to dwell upon. But, when we set about the work of imitation, discouragement took the place of pleasure. "After all, give us the master's hand," we thought; "we can come up to that now and then." We despaired of ever becoming decent penmen with this copper-plate perfection mocking our clumsy fingers.

There was one item in penmanship which our teachers generally omitted altogether. It was the art of making and mending pens. I suffer, and others on my account suffer, from this neglect even at this day. The untraceable "partridge tracks," as some one called them, with which I perplex my correspondents, and am now about to provoke the printer, are chargeable to my ignorance in pen-making. It is a fact, however some acquaintances may doubt it, that I generally write very legibly, if not gracefully, whenever I borrow, beg, or steal a pen.

Let not the faithful Wrifford, should his eye chance to fall on this lament, think that I have forgotten his twelve lessons, of one hour each, on twelve successive, cold November days, when I was just on the eve of commencing pedagogue for the first time—(for I, too, have kept a district school, in a manner somewhat like "as it was")—I have not forgotten them. He did well for me. But, alas! his tall form bent over my shoulder, his long flexile finger adjusted my pen, and his vigilant eye glanced his admonitions, in vain. That thirteenth lesson which he added gratis, to teach us pen-making, I

was so unfortunate as to lose. Lamentable to me and to many others, that I was kept away.

I blush while I acknowledge it, but I have taught school, have taught penmanship, have made and mended a hundred pens a day, and all the time I knew not much more of the art of turning quill into pen, than did the goose from whose wing it was plucked. But my manufactures were received by my pupils, as good. Good, of course, they must be; for the master made them, and who should dare to question *his* competency? If the instrument did not operate well, the fault must certainly be in the fingers that wielded, not those that wrought it.

O ye pedagogues, whom I have here condemned to "everlasting fame!" taking it for granted that this record will be famous forever, be not too angry with my humble authorship; for I, too, let it be repeated, have *kept* a district school as it *was*, as well as *been* to one. But, brother pedagogues of the past! I will tell you what I purpose to do: perhaps some of you will purpose to do so likewise. Should this exposure of our deficiencies meet with a tolerable sale, I purpose to employ a teacher in the art of cutting, splitting, and shaving pen timber into the best possible fitness for chirographic use. It is my heart's hope, and it shall be my hand's care, that he may not teach in vain. Then, if I cannot make amends to my cheated pupils, I trust that the wearied eyes and worn-out patience of former tracers of "partridge tracks" shall recover, to be thus wearied and worn out no more.

CHAPTER XIV.

SEVENTH WINTER, BUT NOT MUCH ABOUT IT—EIGHTH WINTER—MR. JOHNSON—GOOD ORDER, AND BUT LITTLE PUNISHING—A STORY ABOUT PUNISHING—NINTH WINTER.

OF my seventh winter I have but little to say; for but little was done worthy of record here. We had an indolent master and an idle school. Some tried to kindle up the speaking spirit again; but the teacher had no taste that way. But there was dialoguing enough nevertheless—in that form called *whispering*. Our school was a theatre in earnest; for “plays” were going on all the time. It was “acting” to the life, acting any-how rather than like scholars at their books. But let that winter and its works, or rather want of works, pass. Of the eighth I can say something worth notice, I think.

In consequence of the lax discipline of the two last winters, the school had fallen into very idle and turbulent habits. “A master that will keep order, a master that will keep order!” was the cry throughout the district. Accordingly such a one was sought, and fortunately found. A certain Mr. Johnson, who had taught in a neighboring town, was

famous for his strictness, and that without much punishing. He was obtained at a little higher price than usual, and was thought to be well worth the price. I will describe his person; and relate an incident as characteristic of the man.

Mr. Johnson was full six feet high, with the diameter of his chest and limbs in equal proportion. His face was long, and as dusky as a Spaniard's; and the dark was still darkened by the roots of an enormous beard. His eyes were black, and looked floggings and blood from out their cavernous sockets, which were overhung by eyebrows not unlike brush-heaps. His hair was black and curly, and extended down, and expanded on each side of his face in a pair of whiskers a freebooter might have envied.

He possessed the longest, widest, and thickest ruler I ever saw. This was seldom brandished in his hand, but generally lay in sight upon the desk. Although he was so famous for his orders in school, he scarcely ever had to use his punitive instrument. His look, bearing, and voice were enough for the subjection of the most riotous school. Never was our school so still and so studious as this winter. A circumstance occurred the very first day, which drove every thing like mischief in consternation from every scholar's heart. Abijah Wilkins had for years been called the worst boy in school. Masters could do nothing with him. He was surly, saucy, profane, and truthless. Mr. Patch took him from an alms-house when he was eight years old,

which was eight years before the point of time now in view. In his family were mended neither his disposition, his manners, nor even his clothes. He looked like a morose, unpitied pauper still. He had shaken his knurly and filthy fist in the very face and eyes of the last winter's teacher. Mr. Johnson was told of this son of perdition before he began, and was prepared to take some efficient step at his first offence.

Well, the afternoon of the first day, Abijah thrust a pin into a boy beside him, which made him suddenly cry out with the sharp pain. The sufferer was questioned; Abijah was accused, and found guilty. The master requested James Clark to go to his room, and bring a rattan he would find there, as if the formidable ferule was unequal to the present exigency. James came with a rattan very long and very elastic, as if it had been selected from a thousand, not to walk with, but to whip. Then he ordered all the blinds next to the road to be closed. He then said, "Abijah, come this way." He came. "The school may shut their books, and suspend their studies a few minutes. Abijah, take off your frock, fold it up, lay it on the seat behind you." Abijah obeyed these several commands with sullen tardiness. Here, a boy up towards the back seat burst out with a sort of shuddering laugh, produced by a nervous excitement he could not control. "Silence!" said the master, with a thunder, and a stamp on the floor that made the house quake. All was as still as midnight—not a foot moved, not a

seat cracked, not a book rustled. The school seemed to be appalled. The expression of every countenance was changed; some were unnaturally pale, some flushed, and eighty distended and moistening eyes were fastened on the scene. The awful expectation was too much for one poor girl. "May I go home?" she whined with an imploring and terrified look. A single glance from the countenance of authority crushed the trembler down into her seat again. A tremulous sigh escaped from one of the larger girls, then all was breathlessly still again. "Take off your jacket also, Abijah. Fold it, and lay it on your frock." Mr. Johnson then took his chair, and set it away at the farthest distance the floor would permit, as if all the space that could be had would be necessary for the operations about to take place. He then took the rattan, and seemed to examine it closely, drew it through his hand, bent it almost double, laid it down again. He then took off his own coat, folded it up, and laid it on the desk. Abijah's breast then heaved like a bellows, his limbs began to tremble, and his face was like a sheet. The master now took the rattan in his right hand, and the criminal by the collar with his left, his large knuckles pressing hard against the shoulder of the boy. He raised the stick high over the shrinking back. Then, oh! what a screech! Had the rod fallen? No, it still remained suspended in the air. "O—I won't do so agin—I'll *never* do so agin—O—O—don't—I will be good—sartinly will." The threatening instru-

ment of pain was gently taken from its elevation. The master spoke: "You promise, do you?" "Yis, sir,—oh! yis, sir." The tight grasp was withdrawn from the collar. "Put on your frock and jacket, and go to your seat. The rest of you may open your books again." The school breathed again. Paper rustled, feet were carefully moved, the seats slightly cracked, and all things went stilly on as before. Abijah kept his promise. He became an altered boy; obedient, peaceable, studious. This long and slow process of preparing for the punishment was artfully designed by the master, gradually to work up the boy's terrors and agonizing expectations to the highest pitch, until he should yield like a babe to the intensity of his emotions. His stubborn nature, which had been like an oak on the hills which no storm could prostrate, was whittled away and demolished, as it were, sliver by sliver.

Not Abijah Wilkins only, but the whole school were subdued to the most humble and habitual obedience by the scene I have described. The terror of it seemed to abide in their hearts. The school improved much this winter, that is, according to the ideas of improvement then prevailing. Lessons were well gotten, and well said, although the *why* and the *wherefore* of them were not asked or given.

Mr. Johnson was employed the next winter also, and it was the prevailing wish that he should be engaged for the third time; but he could not be

obtained. His reputation as a teacher had secured for him a school at twenty dollars per month for the year round, in a distant village; so we were never more to sit "as still as mice," in his most magisterial presence. For years the saying in the district, in respect to him was, "He was the best master I ever went to; he kept such good order, and punished so little."

CHAPTER XV.

GOING OUT—MAKING BOWS—BOYS COMING IN—GIRLS
GOING OUT AND COMING IN.

THE young are proverbially ignorant of the value of time. There is one portion of it, however, which they well know how to appreciate. They feel it to be a wealth both to body and soul. Its few moments are truly golden ones, forming a glittering spot amid the drossy dullness of in-school duration. I refer to the forenoon and afternoon recess for "going out." Consider that we came from all the freedom of the farm, where we had the sweep of acres—hills, valleys, woods, and waters, and were crowded, I may say packed, into the district box. Each one had scarcely more space than would allow him to shift his head from an inclination to one shoulder to an inclination to the other, or from leaning on the right elbow, to leaning on the left. There we were, the blood of health bouncing through our veins, feeding our strength, swelling our dimensions; and there we must stay, three hours on a stretch, with the exception of the aforementioned recess. No wonder that we should prize this brief period high, and rush tumultuously out doors to enjoy it.

There is one circumstance in going out which so much amuses my recollection, that I will venture to describe it to my readers. It is the making of our bows, or manners, as it is called. If one wishes to see variety in the doing of a single act, let him look at school-boys, leaving their bows at the door. Tell me not of the diversities and characteristics, of the gentilities and the awkwardnesses in the civility of shaking hands. The bow is as diversified and characteristic, as awkward or genteel, as any movement many-motioned man is called on to make. Especially in a country school, where fashion and politeness have not altered the tendencies of nature by forming the manners of all after one model of propriety. Besides, the bow was before the shake, both in the history of the world, and in that of every individual man. No doubt the world's first gentleman, nature-taught, declined his head in some sort, in saluting for the first time the world's first lady, in primitive Eden. And no doubt every little boy has been instructed to make a "nice bow," from chubby Cain, Abel and Seth, down to the mannered younglings of the present day.

Well, then, it is near half-past ten, A. M., but seemingly eleven to the impatient youngsters; anticipation rather than reflection, being the faculty most in action just now. At last the master takes out his watch, and gives a hasty glance at the index of the hour. Or, if this premonitory symptom does not appear, watching eyes can discern the signs of the time in the face relaxing itself from

severe duty, and in the moving lips just assuming that precise form necessary to pronounce the sentence of liberation. Then, make ready, take aim, is at once the order of every idler. "The boys may go out." The little white heads on the little seat, as it is called, are the foremost, having nothing in front to impede a straight-forward sally. One little nimble-foot is at the door in an instant; and, as he lifts the latch, he tosses off a bow over his left shoulder, and is out in a twinkling. The next perhaps squares himself towards the master with more précision, not having his attention divided between opening the door and leaving his manners. Next comes the very least of the little, just in front of the big-boy rush behind him, tap-tapping and tottering along the floor, with his finger in his nose; but, in wheeling from his bow, he blunders head first through the door, in his anxiety to get out of the way of the impending throng of fists and knees behind, in avoiding which he is prostrated under the tramp of cowhide.

Now come the Bigs from behind the writing benches. Some of them make a bow with a jerk of the head and snap of the neck possible only to giddy-brained, oily-jointed boyhood. Some, whose mothers are of the precise cast, or who have had their manners stiffened at a dancing-school, will wait till the throng is a little thinned; and then they will strut out with their arms as straight at their sides as if there were no such things as elbows, and will let their upper person bend upon the middle

hinge, as if this were the only joint in their frames. Some look straight at their toes, as the face descends toward the floor. Others strain a glance up at the master, displaying an uncommon proportion of that beauty of the eye,—the white. Lastly come the tenants of the extreme back seat, the Anaks of the school. One long-limbed, lank-sided, back-bending fellow of twenty is at the door at four strides; he has the proper curve already prepared by his ordinary gait, and he has nothing to do but swing round towards the master, and his manners are made. Another, whose body is developed in the full proportions of manhood, turns himself half way, and just gives the slightest inclination of the person. He thinks himself too much of a man to make such a ridiculous popping of the pate as the younglings who have preceded him. Another, with a tread that makes the floor tremble, goes straight out through the open door, without turning to the right or left; as much as to say, "I am quite too old for that business."

There are two in the short seat at the end of the spelling floor who have almost attained to the glorious, or rather vain-glorious age of twenty-one. They are perhaps even more aged than the venerable Rabbi of the school himself. So they respect their years, and put away childish things, inasmuch as they do not go out as their juniors do. One of them sticks to his slate. It is his last winter; and, as he did not catch flying time by the forelock, he must cling to his heel. The other unpuckers his

arithmetical brow, puts his pencil between his teeth, leans his head on his right palm, with his left fingers adjusts his foretop, and then composes himself into an amiable gaze upon the fair remainder of the school. Perhaps his eyes leap at once to that damsel of eighteen in the furthestmost seat, who is the secret mistress of his heart.

How still it is in the absence of half the limbs and lips of the domain! That little girl who has been buzzing round her lesson like a bee round a honey-suckle, off and on by turns, is now sipping its sweets, if any sweets there be, as closely and stilly as that same bee plunged in the bell of the flower. The secret of the unwonted silence is, the master knows on which side of the aisle to look for noise and mischief now.

It is time for the boys to come in. The master raps on the window as a signal. At first they scatter in one by one, keeping the door on the slam, slam. But soon, in rush the main body, pell-mell, rubbing their ears, kicking their heels, puffing, panting, wheezing. Impelled by the temporary chill, they crowd round the fire, regaining the needed warmth as much by the exercise of elbows as by the heat of fuel. "Take your seats, you that have got warm," says the master. No one starts. "Take your seats, all of you." Tramp, tramp, how the floor trembles again, and the seats clatter. There goes an ink-stand. Ben pinches Tom to let him know that he must go in first. Tom stands back; but gives Ben a kick on the shins as he passes, to pay for that pinch.

"The girls may go out." The noise and confusion are now of the feminine gender. Trip, trip, rustle, rustle. Shall I describe the diversities of the courtesy? I could pen a trait or two, but prefer to leave the subject to the more discriminating quill of the courtesying sex. The shrill tones and gossiping chatter of girlhood now ring from without. But they do not stay long. Trip, trip, rustle, rustle back again. Half of them are sucking a lump of snow for drink. One has broken an icicle from the well-spout, and is nibbling it as she would a stick of candy. See Sarah jump. The ice-eater's cold, dripping hand has mischievously sprinkled her neck. Down goes the melting little cone, and is scattered in shivers. "Take your seats," says authority with soft command. He is immediately obeyed; and the dull routine rolls on toward noon.

CHAPTER XVI.

NOON—NOISE AND DINNER—SPORTS AT SCHOOL—COASTING—SNOW-BALLING—A CERTAIN MEMORABLE SNOW-BALL BATTLE.

Noon has come. It is even half-past twelve; for the teacher got puzzled with a hard sum, and did not attend to the second reading of the first class so soon as usual by half an hour. It has been hitch, hitch—joggle, joggle—creak, creak, all over the school-room for a considerable time. "You are dismissed," comes at last. The going out of half the school only was a noisy business; but now there is a tenfold thunder, augmented by the windy rush of many petticoats. All the voices of all the tongues now split or rather shatter the air, if I may so speak. There are more various tones than could be indicated by all the epithets ever applied to sound.

The first manual operation is the extracting of certain parcels from pockets, bags, baskets, hat-crowns, and perhaps the capacious cavity formed by the tie of a short open frock. Then what a savory development,—bread, cheese, cakes, pies, sausages, and apples without number! It is voice *versus* appetite now for the occupancy of the mouth. Or,

to speak less lawyer-like and more popularly, they have a *jaw* together.

The case is soon decided, that is, dinner is dispatched. Then commences what, in view of most of us, is the chief business of the day. Before describing this, however, I would premise a little. The principal allurements and prime happiness of going to school, as it used to be conducted, was the opportunity it afforded for social amusement. Our rural abodes were scattered generally a half or a quarter of a mile apart, and the young could not see each other every day as conveniently as they can in a city or a village. The schooling season was therefore looked forward to as one long series of holidays, or, as Mark Martin once said, as so many thanksgiving days, except the music, the sermon, and the dinner. Mark Martin, let me mention by the way, was the wit of the school. Some of his sayings, that made us laugh at the time, I shall hereafter put down. They may not affect the reader, however, as they did us, for the lack of his peculiar manner which set them off. "What a droll fellow Mark Martin is!" used to be the frequent expression.

Should I describe all the pastimes of the winter school, it would require more space than befits my plan. I shall therefore touch only on one or two of the different kinds of out-door frolic, such only as are peculiar to winter, and give a particular zest to the schooling season.

Of all the sportive exercises of the winter school,

the most exhilarating, indeed intensely delightful was sliding down hill, or coasting, as it is called. Not having the privilege of this, excepting in the snowy season, and then with frequent interruptions, it was far more highly prized. The location of our school was uncommonly favorable for this diversion. Situated as we were on a hill, we could go down like arrows for the eighth of a mile on one side, and half that distance on the other. Almost every boy had his sled. Some of us got our names branded on the vehicle, and prided ourselves in the workmanship or the swiftness of it, as mariners do in that of a ship. We used to personify the dear little speeder with a she and a her, seaman-like also. Take it when a few days of severely cold and clear weather have permitted the road to be worn icy smooth, and the careering little coaster is the most enviable pleasure-rider that was ever eager to set out or sorry to stop. The very tugging up hill back again, is not without its pleasure. The change of posture is agreeable, and also the stir of limb and stretch of muscle for the short time required to return to the starting place. Then there is the looking forward to the glorious down-hill again. In all the pleasures of human experience, there is nothing like coasting, for the regular alternation of glowing anticipation and frame-thrilling enjoyment.

Had there been a mill-pond or any other sufficient expanse of water near the old school-house, I should probably now pen a paragraph on the

delights of skating ; but as there was not, and this was not therefore one of *our* school-sports, such a description would not properly belong to these annals.

But there is another pastime which comes only with the winter, and is enjoyed mostly at school, to which I will devote a few pages. It is the chivalrous pastime of snow-balling. Take, for instance, the earliest snow of winter, falling gently and stilly with its feathery flakes, of just the right moisture for easy manipulation. Or when the drifts soften in the mid-winter thaw, or begin to settle beneath the lengthened and sunny days of March, then is the season for the power and glory of a snow-ball fight. The whole school of the martial sex are out of a noon-time, from the veterans of a hundred battles down almost to the freshest recruits of the little front seat. Half against half, unless a certain number agree to "take" all the rest. The oldest are opposed to the oldest in the hostile array, so that the little round, and perhaps hard, missile may not be out of proportion to the age, size, and toughness of the antagonist likely to be hit. The little boys, of course, against the little, with this advantage, that their discharges lose most of their force before reaching the object aimed at. When one is hit, he is not merely wounded ; he is a dead man as to this battle. Here, no quarter is asked or given. The balls whistle, the men fall, until all are defunct but one or two individuals, who remain unkill

because there is no enemy left to hurl the fatal ball.

But our conflicts were not always make-believes, and conducted according to the formal rules of play: these sham-fights sometimes waxed into the very reality of war.

The school was about equally divided between the East and the West ends of the district. From time immemorial there had come down a rivalry between the two parties in respect to physical activity and strength. At the close of the school in the afternoon, and at the parting of the scholars on their different ways toward home, there were almost always a few farewells in the form of a sudden trip-up, a dab of snow, or an icy-ball almost as tenderly soft and agreeable of contact as that mellow thing—a stone. These valedictories were as courteously reciprocated from the other side.

These slight skirmishes would sometimes grow into a general battle, when the arm was not careful to proportion the force just so as to touch and no more, as in a noon-day game.

One battle I recollect, which is worthy of being commemorated in a book, at least a book about boyhood, like this. It is as fresh before my mind's eye as if it were but yesterday. To swell somewhat into the pompous, glorious Waterloo could not be remembered by its surviving heroes with greater tenacity or distinctness.

It had gently but steadily snowed all one December night, and almost all the next day. Owing

to the weather, there were no girls excepting Captain Clark's two, and no very small boys, at school. The scholars had been unusually playful through the day, and had taken liberties which would not have been tolerated in the full school.

When we were dismissed at night, the snow had done falling, and the ammunition of just the right moisture lay in exhaustless abundance on the ground, all as level as a floor; for there had been no wind to distribute unequally the gifts of the impartial clouds. The first boy that sprang from the threshold caught up a quart of the spotless but viscid material, and whitewashed the face of the next one at the door, who happened to belong to the rival side. This was a signal for general action. As fast as the troops poured out, they rushed to the conflict. We had not the coolness deliberately to arrange ourselves in battle-order, line against line; but each aimed at each as he could, no matter whom, how, or where, provided that he belonged to the "other End." We did not round the snow into shape, but hurled and dashed it in large masses, as we happened to snatch or scoop it up. As the combatants in gunpowder war are hidden from each other by clouds of their own raising, so also our warriors clouded themselves from sight. And there were other obstacles to vision besides the discharges in the air; for one, or both of the eyes of us all were glued up and sealed in darkness by the damp, sticky matter. The nasal and auditory cavities too were temporarily closed. And

here and there a mouth, opening after a little breath, received the same snowy visitation.

At length, from putting snow into each other, we took to putting each other into the snow. Not by the formal and deliberate wrestle, but pell-mell, hurly-burly, as foot, hand, or head could find an advantage. The combatants were covered with the clinging element. It was as if their woollen habiliments had turned back to their original white. So completely were we all besmeared by the same material, that we could not tell friend from foe in the blind encounter. No matter for this; we were now crazed with fun; and we were ready to carry it to the utmost extent that time and space and snow would admit. Just opposite the school-house door, the hill descended very steeply from the road for about ten rods. The stone wall just here was quite low, and completely covered with snow even before this last fall. The two stoutest champions of the fray had been snowing it into each other like storm-spirits from the two opposite poles. At length, as if their snow-bolts were exhausted, they seized each other for the tug of muscle with muscle. They had unconsciously worked themselves to the precipitous brink. Another stout fellow caught a glimpse of their position, gave a rush and a push, and both Arctic and Antarctic went tumbling heels hindmost down the steep declivity, until they were stopped by the new-fallen snow in which they were completely buried; and one with his nose downward as if he had voluntarily dived into his

own grave. This was a signal for a general push-off, and the performer of the sudden exploit was the first to be gathered to his victims below. In five minutes, all were in the same predicament but one, who, not finding himself attacked, wiped the plaster from his eyes, and saw himself the lone hero of the field. He gave a victorious shout; then, not liking solitude for a playmate, he made a dauntless leap after the rest; who were now thickly rising from their snowy burial to life, action, and fun anew. Now the game is to put each other down, down, to the bottom of the hill. There is pulling, pushing, pitching, and whirling, every species of manual attack, except the pugilistic thump and knock-down. One long lubber has fallen exactly parallel with the bottom; and, before he can recover himself, two others are rolling him down like a senseless log, until the lumberers themselves are pitched head first over their timber by other hands still behind them. But at length we are all at the bottom of the hill, and indeed at the bottom of our strength. Which End, the East or the West, had the day, could not be determined. In one sense it belonged to neither, for it was night. We now found ourselves in a plight not particularly comfortable to ourselves, nor likely to be very agreeable to the domestic guardians we must now meet. But the battle has been described, and that is enough: there is no glory in the suffering that succeeds. -

CHAPTER XVII.

ARITHMETIC — COMMENCEMENT — PROGRESS — LATE IMPROVEMENT IN THE ART OF TEACHING.

At the age of twelve, I commenced the study of Arithmetic, that chiefest of sciences in Yankee estimation. No man is willing that his son should be without skill in figures. And if he does not teach him his A B C at home, he will the art of counting, at least. Many a father deems it no hardship to instruct his child to enumerate even up to a hundred, when it would seem beyond his capacity, or certainly beyond the leisure of his rainy days and winter evenings, to sit down with the formality of a book, and teach him to read.

The entering on arithmetic was quite an era in my school-boy life. This was placing me decidedly among the great boys, and within hailing distance of manhood. My feelings were consequently considerably elevated. A new Adams's Arithmetic of the latest edition was bought for my use. It was covered by the maternal hand with stout sheep-skin, in the economical expectation, that, after I had done with it, it might help still younger heads to the golden science. A quire of foolscap was made to take the form of a manuscript

of the full length of the sheet, with a pasteboard cover, as more suitable to the dignity of such superior dimensions than flimsy brown paper.

I had also a brand new slate, for Ben used father's old one. It was set in a frame wrought by the aforesaid Ben, who prided himself on his knack at tools, considering that he had never served an apprenticeship at their use. There was no lack of timber in the fabrication. Mark Martin said that he could make a better frame with a jack-knife in his left hand, and keep his right in his pocket.

My first exercise was transcribing from my Arithmetic to my manuscript. At the top of the first page I penned ARITHMETIC, in capitals an inch high, and so broad that this one word reached entirely across the page. At a due distance below, I wrote the word ADDITION in large, coarse hand, beginning with a lofty A, which seemed like the drawing of a mountain peak, towering above the level wilderness below. Then came *Rule*, in a little smaller hand, so that there was a regular gradation from the enormous capitals at the top, down to the fine running—no, hobbling hand in which I wrote off the rule.

Now slate and pencil and brain came into use. I met with no difficulty at first; Simple Addition was as easy as counting my fingers. But there was one thing I could not understand—that carrying of tens. It was absolutely necessary, I perceived, in order to get the right answer; yet it was a mystery which that arithmetical oracle, our

schoolmaster, did not see fit to explain. It is possible that it was a mystery to him. Then came Subtraction. The borrowing of ten was another unaccountable operation. The reason seemed to me then at the very bottom of the well of science; and there it remained for that winter, for no friendly bucket brought it up to my reach.

Every rule was transcribed to my manuscript, and each sum likewise as it stood proposed in the book, and also the whole process of figures by which the answer was found.

Each rule, moreover, was, or rather was to be, committed to memory, word for word, which to me was the most tedious and difficult job of the whole.

I advanced as far as Reduction this first winter, and a third through my manuscript, perhaps. The end of the Arithmetic seemed almost as far off in the future as that end of boyhood and under-age restraint, twenty-one.

The next winter I began at Addition again, to advance just through Interest. My third season I went over the same ground again, and, besides that, ciphered to the very last sum in the Rule of Three. This was deemed quite an achievement for a lad only fourteen years old, according to the ideas prevailing at that period. Indeed I was now fitted to figure on and fill up the blank pages of manhood, to solve the hard question how much money I should be worth in the course of years. In plain language, whoever ciphered through the

above-mentioned rule was supposed to have arithmetic enough for the common purposes of life. If one proceeded a few rules beyond this, he was considered quite smart. But if he went clear through—Miscellaneous Questions and all—he was thought to have an extraordinary taste and genius for figures. Now and then, a youth, after having been through Adams, entered upon old Pike, the arithmetical sage who “set the sums” for the preceding generation. Such were called great “arithmeticians.”

The fourth winter I advanced—but it is not important to the purpose of this work that I should record the minutiae of my progress in the science of numbers. Suffice it to say, that I was not one of the “great at figures.”

The female portion of the school, we may suppose, generally expected to obtain husbands to perform whatever arithmetical operations they might need, beyond the counting of fingers: so the science found no special favor with them. If pursued at all, it was neglected till the last year or two of their schooling. Most were provident enough to cipher as far as through the four simple rules; for although they had no idea of becoming old maids, they might possibly, however, be left widows. Had arithmetic been pursued at the summer school, those who intended to be summer teachers would probably have thought more of the science, and have proceeded further, even perhaps to the Rule of Three. But a schoolmistress would as soon have

expected to teach the Arabic language as the numerical science. So, ignorance of it was no dishonor even to the first and best of the sex.

But what a change have the last few years produced in respect to this subject ! Honor and gratitude be to Pestalozzi ; thanks be to our countrymen, Colburn, Emerson, and others, for making what was the hardest and driest of studies, one of the easiest and most interesting. They have at length tackled the intellectual team aright ; have put the carriage behind the carrier ; pshaw ! this over-refinement spoils the illustration—the cart behind the horse, where it ought always to have been. Formerly, memory, the mind's baggage-waggon—to change the word, but continue the figure—was loaded with rules, rules, words, words, to top-heaviness, and sent lumbering along ; while the understanding, which should have been the living and spirited mover of the vehicle, was kept ill-fed and lean, and put loosely behind, to push after it as it could.

CHAPTER XVIII.

AUGUSTUS STARR, THE PRIVATEER WHO TURNED PEDAGOGUE—HIS NEW CREW MUTINY, AND PERFORM A SINGULAR EXPLOIT.

My tenth winter, our school was put under the instruction of a person named Augustus Starr. He was a native of a neighboring town, and had before been acquainted with the committee. He had taught school some years before, but, for the last few years, had been engaged in a business not particularly conducive to improvement in the art of teaching. He had been an inferior officer aboard a privateer in the late war, which terminated only the winter before. At the return of peace, he betook himself to land again; and, till something more suitable to his tastes and habits should offer, he concluded to resume school-keeping, at least for one winter. He came to our town; and, finding an old acquaintance seeking for a teacher, he offered himself, and was accepted. He was rather genteelly dressed, and gentlemanly in his manners.

Mr. Starr soon manifested that stern command, rather than mild persuasion, had been his method of preserving order, and was to be, still. This would have been put up with; but he soon showed

that he could deal in blows as well as words, and these not merely with the customary ferule, or supple and tingling stick, but with whatever came to hand. He knocked one lad down with his fist, hurled a stick of wood at another, which missed breaking his head because it struck the ceiling, making a dent which fearfully indicated what would have been the consequence had the skull been hit. The scholars were terrified, parents were alarmed, and some kept their younger children at home. There was an uproar in the district. A school-meeting was threatened for the purpose of dismissing the captain, as he began to be called, in reference to the station he had lately filled, although it was not a captaincy. But he commanded the school-house crew: so, in speaking of him, they gave him a corresponding title. In consequence of these indications, our officer became less dangerous in his modes of punishment, and was permitted to continue still in command. But he was terribly severe, nevertheless; and in his words of menace, he manifested no particular respect for that one of the ten commandments which forbids profanity. But he took pains with his pupils, and they made considerable progress according to the prevailing notions of education.

Toward the close of the school, however, Starr's fractious temper, his cuffs, thumps, and cudgelings, waxed dangerous again. There were signs of mutiny among the large scholars, and there were provocations and loud talk among parents. The

man of violence, even at this late period, would have been dismissed by the authority of the district, had not a sudden and less formal ejection overtaken him.

The captain had been outrageously severe, and even cruel, to some of the smaller boys. The older brothers of the sufferers, with others of the back seat, declared among themselves, that they would put him by force out of the school-house, if any thing of the like should happen again. The very afternoon succeeding this resolution, an opportunity offered to put it to the test. John Howe, for some trifling misdemeanor, received a cut with the edge of the ruler on his head, which drew blood. The dripping wound and the scream of the boy were a signal for action, as if a murderer were at his fell deed before their eyes. Thomas Howe, one of the oldest in the school and the brother of the abused, and Mark Martin, were at the side of our privateer in an instant. Two others followed. His ruler was wrested from his hand, and he was seized by his legs and shoulders, before he could scarcely think into what hands he had fallen. He was carried, kicking and swearing, out of doors. But this was not the end of his headlong and horizontal career. "To the side-hill, to the side-hill," cried Mark, who had him by the head. Now it so happened that the hill-side opposite the school-house door was crusted, and as smooth and slippery as pure ice, from a recent rain. To this pitch, then, he was borne, and in all the haste that his violent

struggles would permit. Over he was thrust, as if he were a log; and down he went, giving one of his bearers a kick as he was shoved from their hands, which action of the foot sent him more swiftly on his way from the rebound. There was no bush or stone to catch by in his descent, and he clawed the unyielding crust with his nails, for the want of anything more prominent on which to lay hold. Down, down he went. Oh for a pile of stones or a thicket of thorns to cling to, even at the expense of torn apparel or scratched fingers! Down, down he went, until he fairly came to the climax, or rather anti-climax, of his pedagogical career. Mark Martin, who retained singular self-possession, cried out, "There goes a shooting star."

When our master had come to a "period or full stop," to quote from the spelling book, he lay a moment as if he had left his breath behind him, or as if querying whether he should consider himself alive or not; or perhaps whether it were really his own honorable self who had been voyaging in this unseamanlike fashion, or somebody else. Perhaps he was at a loss for the points of compass, as is often the case in tumbles and topsy-turvies. He at length arose and stood upright, facing the ship of literature which he had lately commanded; and his mutinous crew, great and small, male and female, now lining the side of the road next to the declivity, from which most of them had witnessed his expedition. The movement had been so sud-

den, and the ejection so unanticipated by the school in general, that they were stupefied with amazement. And the bold performers of the exploit were almost as much amazed as the rest, excepting Mark, who still retained coolness enough for his joke. "What think of the *coasting* trade, captain?" shouted Mark; "is it as profitable as privateering?" Our coaster made no reply, but turned in pursuit of a convenient footing to get up into the road, and to the school-house again. While he was at a distance approaching his late station of command, Mark Martin stepped forward to hold a parley with him. "We have a word to say to you, sir, before you come much farther. If you will come back peaceably, you may come; but as sure as you meddle with any of us, we will make you acquainted with the *heft* and the hardness of our fists, and of stones and clubs too, if we must. The ship is no longer yours; so look out, for we are our own men now." Starr replied, "I do not wish to have anything more to do with the school; but there is another law besides club law, and that you have got to take." But when he came up and saw John Howe's face stained with blood, and his head bound up as if it had received the stroke of a cutlass, he began to look rather blank. Our spokesman reminded him of what he had done, and inquired, "which is the worst, a ride and a slide, or a gashed head?" "I rather guess that you are the one to look out for the law," said Thomas Howe, with a threatening tone and look. Whether this

hint had effect, I know not, but he never commenced a prosecution. He gathered up his goods and chattels, and left the school-house. The scholars gathered up their implements of learning, and left likewise, after the boys had taken one more glorious slide down hill.

There were both gladness and regret in that dispersion ;—gladness that they had no more broken heads, shattered hands, and skinned backs to fear ; and regret that the season of schooling, and of social and delightful play, had been cut short by a week.

The news reached most of the district in the course of the next day, that our “man of war,” as he was sometimes called, had sailed out of port the night before.

CHAPTER XIX.

ELEVENTH WINTER—MR. SILVERSON, OUR FIRST TEACHER FROM COLLEGE—HIS BLUNDER AT MEETING ON THE SABBATH—HIS CHARACTER AS A SCHOOLMASTER.

THIS winter, Major Allen was the committee ; and of course, every body expected a dear master, if not a good one ; he had always expressed himself so decidedly against "your cheap trash." They were not disappointed. They had a dear master, high priced and not much worth. Major Allen sent to college for an instructor, as a young gentleman from such an institution must of course be qualified as to learning, and would give a higher tone to the school. He had good reason for the expectation ; as a gentleman from the same institution had taught the two preceding winters in another town where Major Allen was intimately acquainted, and gave the highest satisfaction. But he was a very different sort of person from Mr. Frederic Silverson, of the city of —, member of the junior class in — College. This young gentleman did not teach eight weeks, at eighteen dollars per month, for the sake of the trifling sum to pay his college bills, and help him to rub a little more easily through. He kept for fun, as he told his fellow

bucks ; that is, to see the fashions of country life, to "cut capers" among folks whose opinion he didn't care for, and to bring back something to laugh about all the next term. The money, too, was a consideration, as it would pay a bill or two which he preferred that his very indulgent father should not know of.

Major Allen had written to some of the college authorities for an instructor, not doubting that he should obtain one of proved worth, or at least one who had been acquainted with country schools in his boyhood, and would undertake with such motives as would ensure a faithful discharge of his duties. But a tutor, an intimate acquaintance of Silverson's family, was requested to aid the self-rusticating son to a school ; so by this means this city beau and college buck was sent to preside over our district seminary of letters.

Well, Mr. Silverson arrived on Saturday evening at Capt. Clark's. Sunday, he went to meeting. He was, indeed, a very genteel-looking personage, and caused quite a sensation among the young people in our meeting-house, especially those of our district. He was tall, but rather slender, with a delicate skin, and a cheek whose roses had not been uprooted from their native bed by what, in college, is called hard digging. His hair was cut and combed in the newest fashion, as was supposed, being arranged very differently from that of our young men. Then he wore a cloak of many-colored plaid, in which flaming red, however, was

predominant. A plaid cloak—this was a new thing in our obscure town at that period, and struck us with admiration. We had seen nothing but surtouts and great coats from our fathers' sheep and our mothers' looms. His cravat was tied behind; this was another novelty. We had never dreamed but that the knot should be made, and the ends should dangle beneath the chin. Then his bosom flourished with a ruffle, and glistened with a breast-pin, such as were seldom seen so far among the hills.

Capt. Clark unconsciously assumed a stateliness of gait unusual to him, as he led the way up the centre aisle, introduced the gentleman into his pew, and gave him his own seat, that is, next the aisle, and the most respectable in the pew. The young gentleman, not having been accustomed to such deference in public, was a little confused; and when he heard, "That is the new master," whispered very distinctly by some one near, and, on looking up, saw himself the centre of an all-surrounding stare, he was smitten with a fit of bashfulness, such as he had never felt before. So he quiddled with his fingers, sucked and bit his lips, as a relief to his feelings, the same as those rustic starers would have done at a splendid party in his mother's drawing-rooms. During singing, he was intent on the hymn-book, in the prayer he bent over the pew-side, and during the sermon looked straight at the preacher—a church-like deportment which he had never, perhaps, manifested before,

and probably may never have since. He was certainly not so severely decorous in that meeting-house again. After the forenoon services, he committed a most egregious blunder, by which his bashfulness was swallowed up in shame. It was the custom in country towns then, for all who sat upon the centre or broad aisle, as it was called, to remain in their pews till the reverend man of the pulpit had passed along by. Our city-bred gentleman was not apprised of this etiquette; for it did not prevail in the metropolis. Well, as soon as the last *amen* was pronounced, Capt. Clark politely handed him his hat; and, being next to the pew door, he supposed he must make his egress first. He stepped out, and had gone several feet down the aisle, when he observed old and young standing in their pews on both sides, in front of his advance, staring at him as if surprised, and some of them with an incipient laugh. He turned his head, and gave a glance back; and, behold, he was alone in the long avenue, with a double line of eyes aimed at him from behind as well as before. All seemed waiting for the minister, who by this time had just reached the foot of the pulpit stairs. He was confounded with a consciousness of his mistake. Should he keep on or return to the pew, was a momentary question. It was a dilemma worse than any in logic: it was a severe "screw."* But

* When a scholar gets considerably puzzled in recitation, he is said in college to take a *screw*. When he is so ignorant of his lesson as not to be able to recite at all, he takes a *dead set*.

finally, back he was going, when, behold, Capt. Clark's pew was blocked up by the out-poured and out-pouring throng of people, with the minister at their head. This was a complete "dead set," "above all Greek, above all Roman fame." What should he do now? He wheeled again, dropped his head, put his left hand to his face, and went crouching down the aisle, and out of the door, like a boy going out with the nose-bleed.

On the ensuing morning, our collegian commenced school. He had never taught, and had never resided in the country before. He had acquired a knowledge of the daily routine usually pursued in school, from a class-mate who had some experience in the vocation; so he began things right end foremost, and finished at the other extremity in due order; but they were most clumsily handled all the way through. His first fault was exceeding indolence. He had escaped beyond the call of the morning prayer-bell, that had roused him at dawn, and he seemed resolved to replenish his nature with sleep. He was generally awakened to the consciousness of being a schoolmaster by the ringing shouts of his waiting pupils. Then a country breakfast was too delicious a contrast to college commons to be cut short. Thus that point of duration called nine o'clock, and school-time, often approximated exceedingly near to ten that winter.

Mr. Silversen did not visit in the several families of the district, as most of his predecessors had done. He would have been pleased to visit at every house,

for he was socially inclined ; and what was more, he desired to pick up " food for fun " when he should return to college. But the people did not think themselves " smart " enough to entertain a collegian, and the son of the rich Mr —, of the city of —, besides. Or, perhaps, what is coming nearer the precise truth, his habits and pursuits were so different from theirs, that they did not know exactly how to get at him, and in what manner to attempt to entertain him ; and he, on the other hand, did not know how to fall into the train of their associations in his conversation, so as to make them feel at ease, and, as it were, at home with him. Another circumstance ought to be mentioned, perhaps. The people very soon contracted a growing prejudice against our schoolmaster, on account of his very evident unfitness for his present vocation, and especially his unpardonable indolence and neglect of duty.

So Mr. Silversen was not invited out, excepting by Major Allen, who engaged him, and by two or three others who chanced to come in contact with him, and to find him more sociably disposed, and a less formidable personage, than they anticipated. He spent most of his evenings, therefore, at his boarding-place, with one volume in his hand, generally that of a novel, and another volume issuing from his mouth,—that of smoke ; and, as his chief object was just to kill time, he was not careful that the former should not be as fummy, as baseless, and as unprofitable as the latter. As for the Greek,

Latin, and mathematics, to which he should have devoted some portion of his time, according to the college regulations, he never looked at them till his return. Then he just glanced them over, and trusted luck when he was examined for two weeks' study, as he had done a hundred times before at his daily recitation.

What our young college buck carried back to laugh about all the next term, I do not know, unless it was his own dear self, for being so foolish as to undertake a business for which he was so utterly unfit, and from which he derived so little pleasure, compared with his anticipations.

Before closing this chapter, I would caution the reader not to take the subject of it as a specimen of all heirs of city opulence who are, or have been, members of college, and have perhaps attempted country school-keeping. I have known many of very different stamp. One gentleman in particular rises to recollection, the son of very affluent but also very judicious parents. While a student in college, he took a district school for the winter vacation. His chief purpose was to add to his stores of valuable knowledge, and prepare himself for wider usefulness. He would not study the things of ancient Greece and Rome, and of modern Europe, and neglect the customs and manners, and the habits of thinking and feeling, characteristic of his own nation. But his own nation were substantially the farmers and mechanics scattered on the hills and along the valleys of the country. To the

country he must therefore go, and into the midst of their very domestic circles to study them. But he did not seek this advantage to the disadvantage of the school committed to his charge. He endeavored to make himself acquainted with his duties as much as he conveniently could beforehand, and then he devoted himself assiduously to them. In the instruction of the young he derived a benefit additional to his principal object in taking the school. He learned the art of communication,—of adapting himself to minds differing in capacity and cultivation from his own. In this way he acquired a tact in addressing the young and the less intelligent among the grown-up, which is now not only a gratification, but of great use. He became, moreover, interested in the great subject of education more than he otherwise would,—the education of the great mass of the people, so that now he is one of the most ardent and efficient agents in the patriotic and benevolent work.

This gentleman was exceedingly liked as a teacher, and was very popular as a visitor in the families of the district. “He seems so like one of *us*. He hasn’t an atom of *pride*.” Such were the frequent remarks. And this was what they did not expect of a collegian, city born, and the son of one of the richest men in the State.

He has often remarked since, that these two months spent in a district school and country neighborhood were of as much value to him as any two months of his life ; indeed, of more value than

any single year of his life. His books enriched and disciplined his mind, perhaps; but this mingling with the middle rank, of which the great majority is composed, more thoroughly Americanized his mind. By his residence among the country people, he learned to do what should be done by every citizen of the United States, however distinguished by birth, wealth, talents or education: learned to identify himself with the great body of the nation, to consider himself as "one of the people."

CHAPTER XX.

A COLLEGE MASTER AGAIN—HIS CHARACTER IN SCHOOL AND OUT—OUR FIRST ATTEMPTS AT COMPOSITION—BRIEF SKETCH OF ANOTHER TEACHER.

My twelfth winter has arrived. It was thought best to try a teacher from college again, as the committee had been assured that there were teachers to be found there of the first order, and well worth the high price they demanded for their services. A Mr. Ellis was engaged at twenty dollars per month, from the same institution mentioned before. Particular pains were taken to ascertain the college character, and the school-keeping experience of the gentleman, before his engagement, and they were such as to warrant the highest expectations.

The instructor was to board round in the several families of the district, who gave the board in order to lengthen the school to the usual term. It happened that he was to be at our house the first week. On Saturday Mr. Ellis arrived. It was a great event to us children for the master to stop at our house, and one from college too. We were smitten with bashfulness, and stiffened into an awkwardness unusual with us, even among strangers. But this did not last long. Our guest put us all at

ease very soon. He seemed just like one of us, or like some unpuffed-up uncle from genteeler life, who had dropped in upon us for a night, with cordial heart, chatty tongue, and merry laugh. He seemed perfectly acquainted with our prevailing thoughts and feelings, and let his conversation slide into the current they flowed in, as easily as if he had never been nearer college than we ourselves. With my father he talked about the price of produce, the various processes and improvements in agriculture, and the politics of the day, and such other topics as would be likely to interest a farmer so far in the country. And those topics, indeed, were not a few. Some students would have sat in dignified or rather dumpish silence, and have gone to bed by mid-evening, simply because those who sat with them could not discourse on those deep things of science, and lofty matters of literature, which were particularly interesting to themselves. With my mother Mr. Ellis talked at first about her children. He patted a little brother on his cheek, took a sister on his knee, and inquired the baby's name. Then he drew forth a housewifely strain concerning various matters in country domestic life. Of me he inquired respecting my studies at school years past ; and even condescended to speak of his own boyhood and youth, and of the sports as well as the duties of school. The fact is, that Mr. Ellis had always lived in the country till three years past ; his mind was full of rural remembrances ; and he knew just how to take us to be agreeable himself, and to elicit entertainment in return.

Mr. Ellis showed himself at home in school, as well as at the domestic fireside. He was perfectly familiar with his duties, as custom had prescribed them, but he did not abide altogether by the old usages. He spent much time in explaining those rules in arithmetic and grammar, and those passages in the spelling-book, with which we had hitherto lumbered our memories.

This teacher introduced a new exercise into our school, that we had never thought of before as being possible to ourselves. It was composition. We hardly knew what to make of it. To write—to put sentence after sentence like a newspaper, a book, or a sermon—oh! we could not do this; we could not think of such a thing; indeed, it was an impossibility. But we must try, at any rate. The subject given out for this novel use of thought and pen was friendship. Friendship—what had we to say on this subject? We could feel on it, perhaps, especially those of us who had read a novel or two, and had dreamed of eternal friendship. But we had not a single idea. Friendship! oh! it is a delightful thing! This, or something similar, was about all we poor creatures could think of. What a spectacle of wretchedness did we present! A stranger would have supposed us all smitten with the toothache, by the agony expressed in the face. One poor girl put her head down into a corner, and cried till the master excused her. And, finally, finding that neither smiles nor frowns would put ideas into our heads, he let us go for that week.

In about a fortnight, to our horror, the exercise was proposed again. But it was only to write a letter. Any one could do as much as this, the master said ; for almost every one had occasion to do it in the course of life. Indeed, we thought, on the whole, that we *could* write a letter, so at it we went with considerable alacrity. But our attempts at the epistolary were nothing like those spirited, and even witty, products of thought which used ever to be flying from seat to seat in the shape of billets. The sprightly fancy and the gushing heart seemed to have been chilled and deadened by the reflection that a letter *must* be written, and the master *must* see it. These episotlary compositions generally began, continued, and closed all in the same way, as if all had got the same recipe from their grandmothers for letter writing. They mostly commenced in this manner : "Dear friend, I take my pen in hand to inform you that I am well, and hope you are enjoying the same blessing." Then there would be added, perhaps, "We have a very good schoolmaster ; have you a good one ? How long has your school got to keep ? We have had a terrible stormy time on't," &c. Mark Martin addressed the master in his epistle. What its contents were I could not find out ; but I saw Mr. Ellis read it. At first he looked grave, as at the assurance of the youth ; then a little severe, as if his dignity was outraged ; but in a moment he smiled, and finally he almost burst out with laughter at some closing witticism.

Mark's was the only composition that had any nature and soul in it. He wrote what he thought, instead of thinking what to write, like the rest of us, who, in the effort, thought just nothing at all; for we wrote words which we had seen written a hundred times before.

Mr. Ellis succeeded in delivering us from our stale and flat formalities before he had done. He gave us no more such abstract and lack-idea subjects as friendship. He learned better how to accommodate the theme to the youthful mind. We were set to describe what we had seen with our eyes, heard with our ears, and what had particularly interested our feelings at one time and another. One boy described the process of cider-making. Another gave an account of a squirrel-hunt; another of a great husking; each of which had been witnessed the autumn before. The girls described certain domestic operations. One, I remember, gave quite an amusing account of the coming and going, and final tarrying, of her mother's soap. Another penned a sprightly dialogue, supposed to have taken place between two sisters on the question, which should go a visiting with mother, and which should stay at home and "take care of the things."

The second winter (for he taught two), Mr. Ellis occasionally proposed more abstract subjects, and such as required more thinking and reasoning, but still, such as were likely to be interesting, and on which he knew his scholars to possess at least a few ideas.

I need not say how popular Mr. Ellis was in the district. He was decidedly the best schoolmaster I ever went to, and he was the last.

I have given him a place here, not because he is to be classed with his predecessors who taught the district school as it *was*, but because he closed the series of my own instructors there, and was the last, moreover, who occupied the old school-house. He commenced a new era in our district.

Before closing, I must give one necessary hint. Let it not be inferred from this narrative of my own particular experience, that the best teachers of district schools are to be found in college only. The very next winter, the school was blessed with an instructor even superior to Mr. Ellis, although he was not a collegian. Mr. Henry, however, had well disciplined and informed his mind, and was, moreover, an experienced teacher. I was not one of his pupils; but I was in the neighborhood, and knew of his methods, his faithfulness, and success. His tall, spare, stooping and dyspeptic form is now distinctly before my mind's eye. I see him wearied with incessant exertion, taking his way homeward at the close of the afternoon school. His pockets are filled with compositions, to be looked over in private. There are school-papers in his hat too. A large bundle of writing-books is under his arm. Through the long evening, and in the little leisure of the morning, I see him still hard at work for the good of his pupils. Perhaps he is surrounded by a circle of the larger scholars, whom

he has invited to spend the evening with him, to receive a more thorough explanation of some branch or item of study than there was time for in school. But stop—Mr. Henry did not keep the district school as it *was*—why, then, am I describing him?

CHAPTER XXI.

THE EXAMINATION AT THE CLOSING OF THE SCHOOL.

THE district school as it was, generally closed, in the winter, with what was called an "Examination." This was usually attended by the minister of the town, the committee who engaged the teacher, and such of the parents as chose to come in. Very few, however, were sufficiently interested in the improvement of their children, to spend three uncomfortable hours in the hot and crowded school-room, listening to the same dull round of words, year after year. If the school had been under the care of a good instructor, all was well of course; if a poor one, it was too late to help it. Or, perhaps, they thought they could not afford the time on a fair afternoon; and, if the weather was stormy, it was rather more agreeable to stay at home; besides, "Nobody else will be there, and why should I go?" Whether such were the reflections of parents or not, scarcely more than half of them, at most, ever attended the examination. I do not recollect that the summer school was examined at all. I know not the reason of this omission, unless it was that such had been the custom from time immemorial.

We shall suppose it to be the last day of the winter school. The scholars have on their better clothes, if their parents are somewhat particular, or if the everyday dress "looks quite too bad." The young ladies, especially, wear the next best gown, and a more cleanly and tastefully worked neckerchief. Their hair displays more abundant curls and a more elaborate adjustment.

It is noon. The school-room is undergoing the operation of being swept as clean as a worn-out broom in the hands of one girl, and hemlock twigs in the hands of others, will permit. Whew—what a dust! Alas for Mary's cape, so snow-white and smooth in the morning! Hannah's curls, which lay so close to each other, and so pat and still on her temples, have got loose by the exercise, and have stretched themselves into the figure of half-straightened cork-screws, nearly unfit for service. The spirit of the house-wife dispossesses the bland and smiling spirit of the school-girl. The masculine candidates for matrimony can now give a shrewd guess who are endued with an innate propensity to scold; who will be Xantippes to their husbands, should they ever get their Cupid's nests made up again so as to catch them. "Be still, Sam, bringing in snow," screams Mary. "Get away boys, off out doors, or I'll sweep you into the fire," snaps out Hannah, as she brushes the urchins' legs with her hemlock. "There, take that," screeches Margaret, as she gives a provoking lubber a knock with the broom handle; "there, take

that, and keep your wet, dirty feet down off the seats."

The sweeping and scolding are at length done. The girls are now brushing their clothes, by flapping handkerchiefs over themselves and each other. The dust is subsiding; one can almost breathe again. The master has come, all so prim, with his best coat and a clean cravat; and, may be, a collar is stiff and high above it. His hair is combed in its genteelest curvatures. He has returned earlier than usual, and the boys are cut short in their play,—the glorious fun of the last noon-time. But they must all come in. But what shall the visitors sit on? "Go up to Captain Clark's, and borrow some chairs," says the master. Half a dozen boys are off in a moment, and next, more than half a dozen chairs are sailing, swinging, and clattering through the air, and set in a row round the spelling-floor.

The school are at length all seated at their books, in palpitating expectation. The master makes a speech on the importance of speaking up, "loud and distinct," and of refraining from whispering, and all other things well known to be forbidden. The writing-books and ciphering manuscripts are gathered and piled on the desk, or the bench near it. "Where is your manuscript, Margaret?" "I carried it home last night." "Carried it home!—what's that for?" "'Cause I was ashamed on't—I haven't got half so far in 'rethmetic as the rest of the girls who cipher, I've had to stay at home so much."

A heavy step is heard in the entry. All is hushed within. They do nothing but breathe. The door opens—it is nobody but one of the largest boys who went home at noon. There are sleigh-bells approaching,—hark, do they stop? yes, up in Capt. Clark's shed. Now there is another tread, then a distinct and confident rap. The master opens the door, and the minister salutes him, and, advancing, receives the simultaneous bows and courtesies of the awed ranks in front. He is seated in the most conspicuous and honorable place, perhaps in the magisterial desk. Then some of the neighbors scatter in, and receive the same homage, though it is proffered with a more careless action and aspect.

Now commences the examination. First, the younger classes read and spell. Observe that little fellow, as he steps from his seat to take his place on the floor. It is his day of public triumph, for he is at the head; he has been there the most times, and a ninepence swings by a flaxen string from his neck. His skin wants letting out, it will hardly hold the important young gentleman. His mother told him this morning, when he left home, "to speak up like a minister," and his shrill oratory is almost at the very pinnacle of utterance.

The third class have read. They are now spelling. They are famous orthographers; the mightiest words of the spelling columns do not intimidate them. Then come the numbers, the abbreviations, and the punctuation. Some of the little throats are almost choked by the hurried ejection of big words and stringy sentences.

The master has gone through with the several accomplishments of the class. They are about to take their seats. "Please to let them stand a few moments longer, I should like to put out a few words to them, myself," says the minister. Now look out. They expect words as long as their finger, from the widest columns of the spelling-book, or perhaps such as are found only in the dictionary. "Spell *wrist*," says he to the little sweller at the head. "O, what an easy word!" r-i-s-t, wrist. It is not right. The next, the next—they all try, or rather do not attempt the word; for if r-i-s-t does not spell *wrist*, they cannot conceive what does. "Spell *gown*, Anna." G-o-u-n-d. "O no, it is *gown*, not *gound*. The next try." None of them can spell this. He then puts out *penknife*, which is spelt without the k, and then *andiron*, which his honor at the head rattles off in this way, "h-a-n-d hand, i-u-r-n hand-iurn."

The poor little things are confused as well as discomfited. They hardly know what it means. The teacher is disconcerted and mortified. It dawns on him, that, while he has been following the order of the book, and priding himself that so young scholars can spell such monstrous great words,—words which perhaps they will never use, they cannot spell the names of the most familiar objects. The minister has taught him a lesson.

The Writing-books are now examined. The mighty pile is lifted from the desk, and scattered along through the hands of the visitors. Some are

commended for the neatness with which they have kept their manuscripts ; some, for improvement in writing ; of some, probably of the majority, is said nothing at all.

“ Whew ! ” softly breathed the minister, as he opened a writing-book, some of whose pages were a complete ink-souse. He looked on the outside, and Simon Patch was the name that lay sprawling in the dirt which adhered to the newspaper cover. Simon spied his book in the reverend gentleman’s hands, and noticed his queer stare at it. The minister looked up ; Simon shrunk and looked down, for he felt that his eye was about to seek him. He gazed intensely in the book before him without seeing a word, at the same time earnestly sucking the pointed lapel of his Sunday coat. But Simon escaped without any audible rebuke.

Now comes the arithmetical examination ; that is, the proficient in this branch are required to say the rules. Alas me ! I had no reputation at all in this science. I could not repeat more than half the rules I had been over, nor more than the half of that half in the words of the book, as others could. What shame and confusion of face were mine on the last day, when we came to be questioned in Arithmetic ! But when Mr. Ellis had his examination, I looked up a little, and felt that I was not so utterly incompetent as my previous teachers, together with myself, had supposed.

Then came the display in Grammar, our knowledge of which is especially manifested in parsing. A piece is selected which we have parsed in the

course of the school, and on which we are again drilled so as to become as familiar with the parts of speech, and the governments and agreements of which, as we are with the buttons and button-holes of our jackets. We appear, of course, amazingly expert.

We exhibited our talent at Reading, likewise, in passages selected for the occasion, and conned over, and read over, until the dullest might call all the words right, and the most careless mind all the "stops and marks."

But this examination was a stupid piece of business to me, as is evident enough from this stupid account of it. The expectation and preparation were somewhat exhilarating, as I trust has been perceived; but, as soon as the anticipated scene had commenced, it grew dull, and still more dull, just like this chapter.

But let us finish this examination, now we are about it. Suppose it finished then. The minister remarks to the teacher, "Your school appears very well, in general, sir;" then he makes a speech, then a prayer, and his business is done. So is that of schoolmaster and school. "You are dismissed," is uttered for the last time this season. It is almost dark, and but little time left for a last trip-up, snow-ball, or slide down hill. The little boys and girls, with their books and dinner baskets, ride home with their parents, if they happen to be there. The larger ones have some last words and laughs, together, and then they leave the Old School-house till December comes round again.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE OLD SCHOOL-HOUSE AGAIN—ITS APPEARANCE THE
LAST WINTER—WHY SO LONG OCCUPIED—A NEW ONE
AT LAST.

My first chapter was about the Old School-house : so shall be my last. The declining condition in which we first found it, has waxed into exceeding infirmity by the changes of thirteen years. After the summer school succeeding my thirteenth winter of district education, it was sold and carried piecemeal away, ceasing for ever from the form and name of school-house.

I would have my readers see how the long-used and hard-used fabric appeared, and how near to dissolution it came before the district could agree to accommodate their children with a new one.

We will now suppose it is my last winter at our school. Here we are inside, let us look around a little.

The long writing-benches arrest our attention as forcibly as any thing in sight. They were originally of substantial plank, an inch and a half thick. And it is well that they were thus massive. No board of ordinary measure would have stood the hackings and hewings, the scrapings and borings,

which have been inflicted on those sturdy plank. In the first place, the edge next the scholar is notched from end to end, presenting an appearance something like a broken-toothed mill-saw. Upon the upper surface, there has been carved, or pictured with ink, the likeness of all things in the heavens and on earth ever beheld by a country school-boy ; and sundry guesses at things he never did see. Fifty years has this poor timber been subjected to the knives of idlers, and almost the fourth of fifty I have hacked on it myself ; and by this last winter their width has become diminished nearly one-half. There are, moreover, innumerable writings on the benches and ceilings. On the boys' side were scribbled the names of the Hannahs, the Marys, and the Harriets, toward whom young hearts were beginning to soften in the first gentle meltings of love. One would suppose that a certain Harriet A., was the most distinguished belle the district has ever produced, from the frequency of her name on bench and wall.

The cracked and patched and puttied windows are now still more diversified by here and there a square of board instead of glass.

The master's desk is in pretty good order. The first one was knocked over in a noon-time scuffle, and so completely shattered as to render a new one necessary. This has stood about ten years.

As to the floor, had it been some winters we could not have seen it without considerable scraping away of dust and various kinds of litter ; for a

broom was not always provided, and boys would not wallow in the snow after hemlock, and sweeping could not so well be done with a stick. This winter, however, Mr. Ellis takes care that the floor shall be visible the greater part of the time. It is rough with sundry patches of board nailed over chinks and knot-holes made by the wear and tear of years.

Now we will look at the fire-place. One end of the hearth has sunk an inch and a half below the floor. There are crevices between some of the tiles, into which coals of fire sometimes drop and make the boys spring for snow. The andirons have each lost a fore-foot, and the office of the important member is supplied by bricks which had been dislodged from the chimney-top. The fire-shovel has acquired by accident or age a venerable stoop. The tongs can no longer be called a pair, for the lack of one of the fellow-limbs. The bar of iron running from jamb to jamb in front,—how it is bent and sinking in the middle, by the pressure of the sagging fabric above! Indeed the whole chimney is quite ruinous. The bricks are loose here and there in the vicinity of the fire-place; and the chimney-top has lost so much of its cement that every high wind dashes off a brick, rolling and sliding on the roof, and then tumbling to the ground, to the danger of cracking whatever heedless skull may happen in the way.

The window-shutters, after having shattered the glass by the slams of many years, have broken

their own backs at length. Some have fallen to the ground, and are going the way of all things perishable. Others hang by a single hinge, which is likely to give way at the next high gale, and consign the dangling shutter to the company of its fellows below.

The clap-boards are here and there loose, and dropping one by one from their fastenings. One of these thin and narrow appendages, sticking by a nail at one end, and loose and slivered at the other, sends forth the most ear-rending music to the skillful touches of the North-west. In allusion to the soft-toned instrument of Æolus, it may be termed the Borean harp. Indeed, so many are the avenues by which the wind passes in and out, and so various are the notes, according as the rushing air vibrates a splinter, makes the window clatter, whistles through a knot-hole, and rumbles like big base down the chimney, that the edifice may be imagined uproarious winter's Panharmonicon,* played upon in turn by all the winds.

Such is the condition of the Old School-house, supposing it to be just before we leave it forever, at the close of my thirteenth and last winter at our district school. It has been resorted to summer after summer, and winter after winter, although the observation of parents and the sensations of children have long given evidence that it ought to be abandoned.

* The Panharmonicon is a large instrument in which the peculiar tones of several smaller instruments are combined.

At every meeting on school affairs that has been held for several years, the question of a new school-house has been discussed. All agree on the urgent need of one, and all are willing to contribute their portion of the wherewith ; but when they attempt to decide on its location, then their harmonious action is at an end. All know that this high bleak hill, the coldest spot within a mile, is not the place ; it would be stupid folly to put it here. At the foot of the hill, on either side, is as snug and pleasant a spot as need be. But the East-enders will not permit its location on the opposite side, and the West-enders are as obstinate on their part. Each division declares that it will secede and form a separate district should it be carried further off, although in this case they must put up with much cheaper teachers, or much less schooling, or submit to twice the taxes.

Thus they have tossed the ball of discussion, and sometimes hurled that of contention, back and forth, year after year, to just about as much profit as their children have flung snow-balls in play, or chips and cakes of ice when provoked. At length, Time, the final decider of all things material, wearied with their jars, is likely to end them by tumbling the old ruin about their ears.

Months have passed ; it is near winter again. There is great rejoicing among the children, satisfaction among the parents, harmony between the two Ends. A new school-house has been erected

at last—indeed it has. A door of reconciliation and mutual adjustment was opened in the following manner.

That powerful-to-do, but tardy personage, the Public, began to be weary of ascending and descending Captain Clark's hill. He began to calculate the value of time and horse-flesh. One day it occurred to him that it would be as "cheap, and indeed much cheaper," to go round this hill at the bottom, than to go round it over the top; for it is just as far from side to side of a ball in one direction as in another, and this was a case somewhat similar. He perceived that there would be no more lost in the long run by the expense of carrying the road an eighth of a mile to the south, and all on level ground, than there would be by still wasting the breath of horse and the patience of man in panting up and tottering down this monstrous hill. It seemed as if he had been blind for years, not to have conceived of the improvement before. No time was to be lost now. He lifted up his many-tongued voice, and put forth his many-handed strength; and, in the process of a few months, a road was constructed, curving round the south side of the aforesaid hill, which, after all, proved to be but a few rods longer from point to point than the other.

The district were no longer at variance about the long-needed edifice. The aforementioned improvement had scarcely been decided on, before every one perceived how the matter might be settled. A

school-meeting was soon called, and it was unanimously agreed to erect a new school-house on the new road, almost exactly opposite the old spot, and as equidistant from the two Ends, it was believed, as the equator is from the poles.

Here Mr. Henry *taught* the District School somewhat as it should be ; and it has never since been *kept* as it was.

A SUPPLICATION

TO THE

PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES.

The following article was first published in a Boston newspaper, about fifteen years ago. It was afterwards republished in the Common School Journal. Its object was not to exercise a useless ingenuity in a play upon words, but to attract a more particular, and peradventure, a corrective attention to prevalent inaccuracies of speech. These errors, more or less, still linger upon the lip. Another republication, therefore, may possibly be of some little use. At any rate, the piece will contribute a distinct variety in making up the volume.

A SUPPLICATION.

ABOUT *sixty thousand Slaves*, owned by the *People* of the *United States*, make the following *supplication* to their masters, not for *emancipation*, but for the *amelioration* of the condition of certain individuals of their race.

MOST SOVEREIGN, RIGHTFUL, AND EXCELLENT MASTERS,—We are the *English Language*,—your lawful and perpetual bond-servants, whose names and origin, characters and duties, are so faithfully exhibited, in Noah Webster's great Dictionary. By far the largest part of us have received nothing but the kindest usage from our owners, from time immemorial. Some thousands of us, indeed, were it possible, might die of having nothing to do but sleep, shut up in the dormitory of the Dictionary, or in the composition of some most learned, or most silly book, which the mass of the people never open. But of this we do not complain. Nor do we account it much of an evil, that certain Yankees make us weary, with the monstrously long drawl.

with which they articulate us into use. Nor do we cry out against the painful clipping, cutting-up, and shattering-to-pieces, given us by the African race;—for we serve them as faithfully as we do their white fellow-mortals,—holding that, as it regards all the relations of human beings to us, all men “are born free and equal.”

But now we humbly pray that you will hear what we do complain of. We complain, that certain of our brethren are exceedingly abused, and made wretched, by some thousands, and perhaps millions, of our owners. Their piteous groans have shocked our ears,—their unretrieved sufferings have pained our sympathizing hearts, for many years. We can endure no longer;—we *must* speak. Your ancient servants come, then, supplicating you to take measures for the relief of the sufferings of the individuals of our number, whose names and particular subjects of complaint shall now be enumerated, proceeding in alphabetical order.

Arithmetic,—that accurate calculator, indispensable to this mighty and money-making nation, grievously complains that he is obliged to work for thousands without the use of A-head, and deprived of one of his two *i*'s. Here is a picture of his mutilated form,—*Rethmetic*!

Attacked,—an important character, that figures so gloriously in military despatches, and is so necessary in medical reports,—is forced, by many, to the use of *t*, more than his constitution will admit. He cannot perform his necessary business, you know,

without the use of *t*, twice during every job,—but to have it forced into him three times, causes a change in his constitution and appearance, which he cannot comfortably bear. See how *Attacked* is altered by more *t* than he wants,—*Attack Ted*.

There is another poor fellow, who has a similar affliction,—*Across*. He is forced to the use of *t*, when his constitution cannot bear it at all. See what a spectacle a little *t* makes of him,—*Acrosst*.

That most excellent friend and profitable servant of the Working-men's party, *Earn*, complains that those whom he serves the best, deprive him of what little *e*'s his laborious condition demands. See what *Earn* is brought to by such hard treatment,—*Airn*.

That necessary attendant on every messenger,—*Errand*, is in the same state of suffering, from the same cause. *Errand* is made *Arrant*, which is “notorious, infamous, and ill,” (and of course “not to be endured,”) as you will perceive by looking in the Dictionary.

Andiron—averts that he is willing to bear any burden that will not break his back, and stand any fire that will not melt him down, or burn the house up; but he cannot stand it with any comfort or patience, to be breathed upon by that sneaking whisperer, *h*, in this manner,—*handiron*.

After—is willing to linger behind every body else in his business; but it is a miserable fate to be deprived of so large a portion of his small energy in this way,—*Arter*.

"Go *arter* the cows, 'Tom," says Ma'am Milk-moolly. "I move that we adjourn to *arternoon*," says Squire Goodman, in the Legislature.

Hear, also, how that entirely different character, and bold goer-ahead, growls as he passes on,—*Before*. "I will go forward and do my duty as long as any part of me is left sound ; but my well-being is dreadfully affected by a great many people whom I serve,—as you cannot but perceive,"—*Afore*.

Bellows,—that excellent household servant,—says he has often had his nose stopped up by ashes, and has wheezed with the asthma for months, but all these afflictions are nothing to usage like this,—*Belluses*.

Bachelor—is exceedingly sensitive about what is said of him in the presence of the ladies. He is shockingly mortified at being called *Batchelder*. To be sure, he is a batch-*elder* than he ought to be, regarding the comfort of maidens and the good of his country ; but he is an odd fellow, and wants his own way. He is almost tempted to destroy himself by taking that deadly poison to his nature,—*a wife*,—in order to be relieved from his mortification.

Boil—is at the hot duty of keeping the pot going, and sometimes it is hard work ; however, he complains not of this ; but poor *Boil* has had the jaundice, and all other liver complaints, for years, and is *blubbering* like a baby—all in consequence of this, viz : about nine-tenths of the cooks in America, and two-thirds of the eaters, call him *Bile*.

Cellar—is the lowest character in the house, and takes more wine and cider than any other, and is the *biggest sauce-box* in the world. Yet, with all the propriety of the parlor, and a sobriety, as if not a drop of intoxicating liquor was in him, and with a civility, remarkable in one usually so *sauce-y*, he now implores you to remember that he is a *Cellar*, and not a *Suller*.

Chimney.—Here is a character who ten thousand times would have taken fire at an affront, were it not for the danger of burning up the houses and goods of his abusers,—faithful servant and tender-hearted creature that he is! He is content to do the hottest, hardest, and dirtiest work in the world. You may put as much green wood upon his back as you please, and make him breathe nothing but smoke, and swallow nothing but soot, and stand over steam, till pots and kettles boil no more; all these are ease, pleasantness, and peace, to abuse like this,—*Chimbly*.

Dictionary—rages with all the rough epithets in gentlemanly or vulgar use; and then he melts into the most tender and heart-moving words of entreaty, and, in fact, tries all the various powers of the English language, (for, wonderful scholar! he has it all at his tongue's end.) Still further, mighty lexicographic champions, such as Dr. Webster, Sheridan, Walker, Perry, Jones, Fulton and Knight, and Jameson, besides numerous other inferior defenders,—even hosts of spelling-book makers, have all exerted their utmost in vain, to save him

from the ignominy of being—*Dicksonary*. *Dictionary* is one of the proudest characters in our mighty nation, in respect to his birth and ancestry ; but, used as he is, nobody would dream what his father's name is. Be it known, then, that *Dicksonary* is the son of *Diction*, who is the lineal descendant of that most renowned, and most eloquent Roman orator, *Dico*.

End—is uttering the most dolorous groans. There are certain individuals who are always killing him without putting him to an *end*. See what a torture he is put to—*eend, eend*.

Further,—that friend of the progress and improvements of this ahead-going age, stops by the way to ask relief. He is ready to further all the innumerable plans for the benefit of man, except when he is *brought back* in this way—*Furder*. Then he is so completely nullified, that he can further the march of mind and matter no more.

General,—that renowned and glorifying character, whose fame has resounded through the world, is dishonored and made gloryless by many a brave man as well as chicken-heart. He has now intrenched himself in this position, viz.: that he will no longer magnify many little militia-folks into mightiness, unless they forbear to call him *Gineral*. It is not only a degradation, but it is an offence to his associations. *Gin*—*Gin-er-al* ; *Wine-er-al*, and much more, *Water-al*, would be more glory-giving in these un-treating, or rather, re-treating times of temperance.

Gave,—that generous benefactor, that magnanimous philanthropist, is almost provoked. He declares that he has a good mind, for once, to demand back his donations from the temper-trying mis-callers. I gave a thousand dollars, this very day, towards the completion of Bunker-Hill Monument. But don't say of me, he *gin*. I never *gin* a cent in my life.

Get,—that enterprising and active character, who generally, in this country, helps *Give* and *Gave* to the whole wherewithal of their beneficence, and gains, for old *Keep*, all his hoarded treasures, and is a staunch friend of all the temperate and industrious of the Working-men's party,—*Get* stops to complain, that some of those he serves the best call him —*Git*. And he is very reluctant to get along about his business, till some measures are taken to prevent the abuse. *Get* is now waiting, ye workies of all professions; what say? Will you still, with a merciless *i*, make him *Git*?

Gum—is always on the *jaw*, that he is so often called *Goomb*, in spite of his teeth.

Gown,—that very ladylike personage, is sighing away at the deplorable *de*-formity that *de*-spoils her beauty in the extreme, as is *de*-veloped in the following *de*-tail, *Gown-d*. Oh! ye lords of language! if ye have any gallantry, come to the deliverance of the amiable *gown*, that she may shake off this D-pendant.

Handkerchief,—your personal attendant, is also distressed in the *extreme*. She is kept by many

from her *chief* end in the following cruel manner—
Handker-cher.

January,—that old Roman, is storming away in the most bitter wrath; shaking about his snowy locks, and tearing away at his icy beard, like a madman. “Blast ’em,” roars his Majesty of mid-winter, “don’t they know any better than to call me *Jinuary*?” They say, “It is a terrible cold *Jinuary*,”—then, “It is the *Jinuary* thaw.” Oh! ye powers of the air! help me to freeze and to melt them by turns, every day, for a month, until they shall feel the difference between the vowel *a*, and the vowel *i*. My name is *January*.

Kettle,—that faithful kitchen-servant, is boiling with rage. He is willing to be hung in trammels, and be obliged to get his living by hook and by crook, and be hauled over the coals every day, and take even pot-luck for his fare,—and, indeed, to be called black by the pot;—all this he does not care a snap for; but to be called *Kittle*—*KITTLE*! “Were it not for the stiffness of my limbs, I would soon take leg-bail,” says the fiery hot *Kettle*.

Little—allows that he is a very inferior character, but avers that he is not *least* in the great nation of words. He cannot be *more*, and he will not be *less*. Prompted by a considerate self-respect, he informs us that he is degraded to an unwarrantable diminutiveness by being called—*Leetle*. “A *leetle* too much,” says one. “A *leetle* too far,” says another. “A mighty *leetle* thing,” cries a third. Please to call respectable adjectives by their right names, is the polite request of your humble servant, *Little*.

Lie,—that verb of so quiet a disposition by nature, is roused to complain that his repose is exceedingly disturbed in the following manner. Almost the whole American nation, learned as well as unlearned, have the inveterate habit of saying—*Lay*, when they mean, and might say—*Lie*. “*Lay* down, and *lay* abed, and let it *lay*,” is truly a national sin against the laws of grammar. *Lie* modestly inquires, whether even the *college*-learned characters would not be benefited by a few days’ attendance in a *good* Common School. *Lie* is rather inclined to indolence, and has a very strong propensity to sleep; but he would not be kept in perpetual dormancy for the lack of use. Please to employ me on all proper occasions, gentlemen and ladies;—here I *Lie*.

Liberty—is an all-glorious word, the pride and boast of our country. He has been the orator’s Bucephalus; his very war-horse, with neck “clothed with thunder.” Oh! how the noble creature is degraded! He is made by many a boasting republican, in this land of the free, to pace in this pitiful manner—*Libety*—LIBETY!! Ye sons and daughters of the Revolutionists, if you really aim at your country’s glory, and the world’s best good, give the *r* the heavy tramp of a battle-host. Not *Libety*—but LIBERTY.

Mrs.,—that respectable abbreviation, is exceedingly grieved at the indignity she suffers. The good ladies, whom she represents, are let down from the matrouly dignity, to which she would hold them,

even to the un-married degradation of *Miss*;—and this in the United States, where matrimony is so universally honored and sought after. She desires it to be universally published, that *Miss* belongs only to ladies who have never been blessed with husbands; and that *Mrs.* is the legitimate, and never-to-be-omitted title of those who have been raised to superior dignity by *Hy-men*—(high-men.) N. B. *Mistress*, for which *Mrs.* stands in writing, is generally contracted in speaking to, or of, ladies, by leaving out the letters T and R, in this manner,—*Miss'es*. Oh! ye “bone and muscle of the country!” how can ye refuse to comply with so gentle and lady-like a request? We pray you that from the moment the sacred knot is tied, “until death shall part,” you will say—*Miss'es*. (Oh! how honored your own name to have such a title prefixed!) “*Miss'es* So-or-so, in what manner can I best contribute to your real and permanent happiness?” That’s a good husband!!

Oil,—you all know, has a disposition, smooth to a proverb;—but he is, to say the least, in great danger of losing his fine, easy temper, by being treated in the altogether improper manner that you here behold.—*Ile!* *ILE!* Poor *Oil* has been for centuries crying out O! O! O!! as loudly and roughly as his melodious but sonorous voice will permit; but they will not hear; they still call him—*Ile*.

Potatoes,—(those most indispensable servants to all dinner-eating Americans, and the benevolent furnishers of “*daily bread*,” and, indeed, the whole

living to Pat-land's poor,)—*Potatoes*, are weeping with all their *eyes*, at the agony to which they are put by thousands. They are most unfeelingly mangled, top and toe, in this manner,—*Taters*. Notwithstanding their *extremities*, in the most *mealy*-mouthed manner they exclaim,—Po! Po! gentlemen and ladies! pray spare us a head, and you may bruise our *toes* in welcome. Still, you must confess that *Potaters* is not so sound and *whole*-some as *Potatoes*.

Point—allows that in some respects he is of very minute importance; but asserts that in others he is of the greatest consequence, as in an argument, for instance. He is, in zeal, the *sharpest* of all those who have entered into the present subject of Amelioration. *Point* is determined to prick forward in the cause, till he shall be no longer blunted and turned away from his aim, and robbed of his very nature, in the *measure* you here perceive—*Pint*. Do not disappoint your injured servant, indulgent masters.

Philadelphia—takes off his broad-brim, and, in the softest tones of brotherly love, implores the people of the United States to cease calling him by that harsh, horrid, and un-brotherly name,—*Fellydelphy*. It deprives him of his significance, and ancient and honorable lineage, as every Greek scholar well knows. "Oh!" cries the city of "Brotherly Love," in plaintive, but kindly accents,—"do understand the meaning—behold the amiableness—hearken to the melody, and respect the *sincerity* of *Philadelphia*."

Poetry.—What a halo of glory around this daughter of Genius, and descendant of Heaven ! Behold how she is rent asunder by many a pitiful proser, and made to come *short* of due honor. *Potry*—Apollo and the Muses know nothing about *Potry* !

Quench,—that renowned extinguisher, whom all the world can't hold a candle to, is himself very much *put out*, now and then, from this cause,—some people permit that crooked and hissing serpent *S*, to get before him, and coil round him, while he is in the hurry of duty, as you here see—*Squench* ; and sometimes they give him a horrid black *I*, thus—*Squinch*.

Rather—is universally known to be very nice in his preferences, and to be almost continually occupied in expressing them. Be it as universally known, then, that he is disgusted beyond all bearing at being called—*Ruther*. Oh, how, from time immemorial, has this choice character suffered from the interference of *U*, ye masters !

Sauce—has a good many elements in him, and, above all, a proper share of self-respect. He thinks he has too much spice and spirit to be considered such a flat as this indicates,—*Sass*.

Saucer—complains that he is served the same *sass*. Between them both, unless there is something done, there may be an overflow of *sauciness* to their masters.

Scarce—is not a very frequent complainant of anything,—but he is now constrained to come forward and pour out more plentifully than common.

He complains that certain *Nippies*, both male and female, and hosts of honest imitators, call him *Scurce*, thinking it the very tip of gentility. He will detain you no longer, gentlemen and ladies, for he prefers to be always—*Scarce*.

Such—does not complain of mistaken politeness, but of low and vulgar treatment like this—*Sich*.

Since—has been crying out against the times, from the period of his birth into English. It is abominable that a character of such vast comprehension, should be so belittled. He embraces all antiquity, goes back beyond Adam, yea, as far back into the unbeginningness as you could think in a million of years, and unimaginably further. And, Oh! his hoary head is bowed down with sorrow at being called by two-thirds of the American people, *Sence*. It is hoped that all the Future and all the Past will be—*Since*.

Spectacles,—those twin literati, who are ever poring over the pages of learning, raise eyes of supplication. They say that they cannot *look* with due respect upon certain elderly people, who *pronounce* them more unlettered than they really are, as you may perceive without looking with their interested eyes—*Spetacles*. Venerable friends, pray c us, c us,—and give us our due in the matter of letters, and we shall be not only Spectacles to see with, but to be seen—spectacles of gratitude.

Sit—has been provoked to stand up in his own behalf, although he is of sedentary habits, and is sometimes inclined to be idle. He declares he has

too much pride and spirit to let that more active personage—*Set*—do all his work for him. “*Set* still,” says the pedagogue to his pupils—and parents to their children. “*Set* down, sir,”—say a thousand gentlemen, and some famously learned ones, to their visiters. “The coat *sets* well,” affirms the tailor. Now all this does not *sit* well on your complainant, and he *sets* up his Ebenezer, that he should like a little more to do,—especially in the employ of college-learned men, and also of the teachers of American youth. These distinguished characters ought to *sit* down, and calculate the immense effect of their example in matters of speech.

Sat—makes grievous complaint that he is called *Sot*. He begs all the world to know that he hath not redness of eyes, nor rumminess nor brandiness of breath, nor flamingness of nose, that he should be degraded by the drunkard’s lowest and last name—*Sot*. The court *sat*,—not *sot*,—the company *sat* down to dinner—not *sot* down; but “*verbam SAT*,” if English may be allowed to speak Latin.

Shut.—This is a person of some importance; and, although your slave, is a most exclusive character, as is said of the ultra-fashionables. He is, indeed, the most decisive and unyielding exclusive in the world. He keeps the outs, out, and the ins, in, both in fashionable and political life. He is of most ancient, as well as of most exquisite pretensions,—for he kept the door of Noah’s ark tight against the flood. Now this stiff old aristocrat is made to appear exceedingly flat, silly, and undignified, by

being called, by sundry persons,—*Shet*. “*Shet* the door,” says old Grandsire Grumble, of a cold, windy day. “*Shet* your books,” says the schoolmaster, when he is about to hear the urchins spell. “*Shet* up, you saucy blockhead,” cries he, to young Insolence. This is too bad! It is abominable! a schoolmaster, the appointed keeper of orthographical and orthoepical honor,—letting fall the well-bred and lofty-minded—*Shut*—from his guardian lips, in the shape of *Shet*. Oh! the plebeian! Faithless and unfit pedagogue!! He ought to be banished to *Shet-land*, where by day he should battle with Boreas, and teach A B C to the posterity of Triptolemus Yellowley’s* ass; and where by night his bedchamber should be the *un-shut* North,—his bed the summit of a snow-drift,—his sheets nothing but arctic mists,—and his pillow the fragment of an iceberg!! Away with the traitor to *Shet-land*! O most merciful American masters and mistresses! *Shut* has no relief or safety from the miserableness of *Shet*, but in *U*.

Told—is a round, sounding preterite, that is real music in a singing-school,—it will bear such a round-mouthed thunder of voice. He feels the dignity of his vocation, and asks not to be kept out of use by such bad grammar as this—*Telled*. “He *telled* me so-and-so.” Pshaw! that renowned talker and servant of old Peter Parley, *Tell*, declares that no one has ever derived existence from him by

* A character in one of Scott’s novels.

the name of—*Telled*.—Pray, masters and mistresses, don't now forget what you have been—*Told*.

Yes,—that good-natured personage, affirms that were he not of so complying a disposition, he would henceforth be *no* to every body who should call him—*Yis*. To this pleasant hint, ye kindly ones, you cannot but say, *Yes—YES!!*

Finally, hearken! There is a voice from the past. It is the complaint of departing *Yesterday*. He cries aloud—Give ear, O, To-day, and hear, hear, O, To-morrow! Never, never more, call me *Yisterday!*

We have thus presented you, Sovereign Owners, with the complaints and groans of a considerable number of our race. There are, doubtless, many others, who are also in a state of suffering, but who have uncommon fortitude, or too much modesty, to come forward publicly, and make known their trials to our whole assembled community. Should the abuse of any such happen to be known to you at any time, we pray that the same consideration may be given to them as to the rest. Your supplicants fear that they have wearied your patience. Nevertheless, we must venture a little further in our poor address. Please, then, to lend us your indulgence, a few moments longer.

There is one family in the country, of whom it is difficult for your supplicants to speak with any degree of calmness, or with that charity proper to be exercised towards frail human nature. We mean the DOWNING family. There is no abuse of lan-

guage too gross for them. . They torture words into such unnatural shapes that the stretchings and disjointings of a Catholic Inquisition would be a pleasure in comparison. They make short, long, and long, short, without mercy. Oh ! what agony in their spelling ! An ignorant child might mangle us in orthography, with innocence, as he might stick pins through flies, or pull their wings off, not dreaming of the torture he inflicts ; but when a man,—a statesman,—a military man, and a *Great* man, like the indomitable, the super-heroic and immortally renowned JACK DOWNING, is thus barbarous and butcherly on the servants of his lips and pen, it is

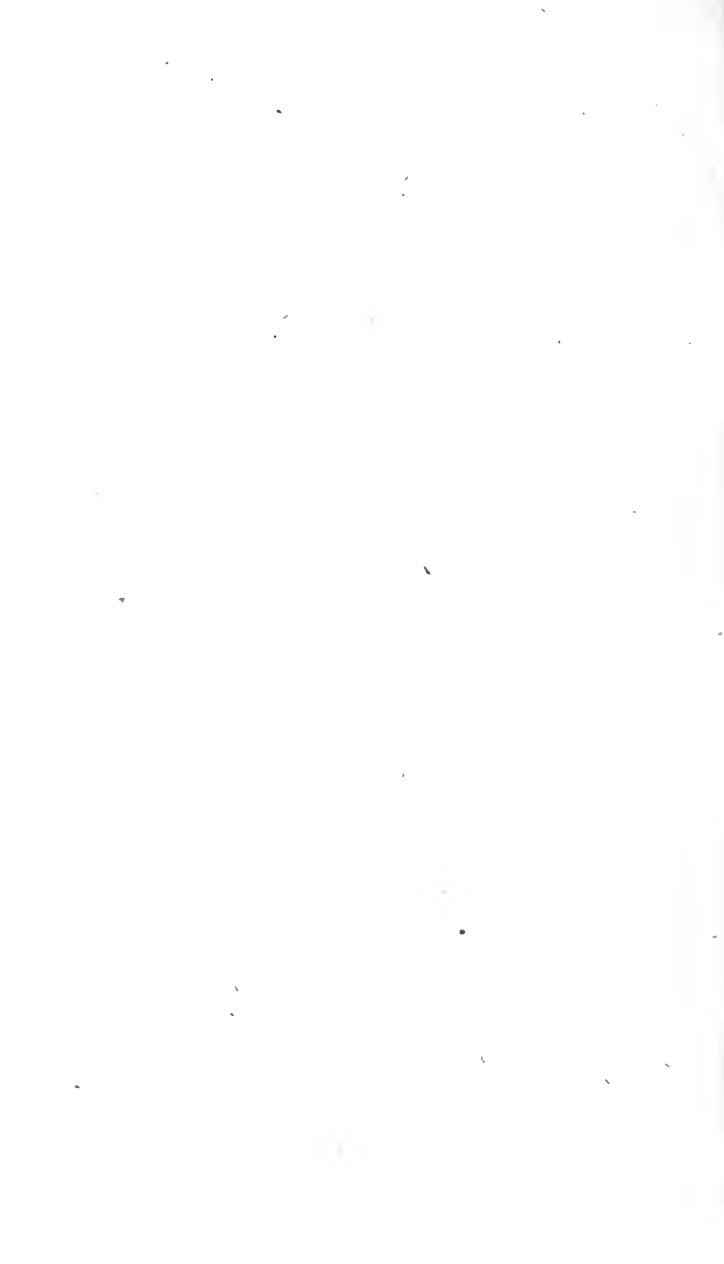
“Above all Greek, above all Roman *fame*,”

in the treatment of slaves. But we will not dwell on the misdoings of the Major, in a vain spirit of vindictiveness. He is dead and gone, according to the record of the Portland Courier, “away down in Maine.” But, alas ! his works remain, disseminating their Vandal influence. Therefore, we earnestly entreat the free, and ought-to-be-enlightened people of the United States, to arise, all as one, in this great cause of *Letters*, and hunt up and gather together all the writings of said JACK DOWNING, and make ashes of them, to be trodden under foot, so as never more to come near any body’s head in the shape and quality of LETTERS. We entreat, also, that the similar writings of his relations,—“Sargent Joel,” and the rest,—and all other *Il-literati* of like

stamp, may be put, ashes to ashes, with the Major's. Still further, in behalf of sound learning and ourselves, we beg that all remaining members of the *Downing* family, may be sought out by the protecting hand of Public Justice, and hurled into that original nothingness, from which, without father or mother, they rose. Or, if the following process shall be deemed of greater utility, we desire that it may be adopted instead, viz:—Let all parents and school-teachers take the afore-mentioned *Il*-literature, and point out to their children and pupils all the abuses of good grammar and correct spelling therein to be found. Let these abuses be made a sign and a warning to them, never to be guilty of the same. Let this be done, and we will cease from our maledictions on the Downingville heroes and heroines. Yea, we prefer that the last suggestion should be carried into effect. Let the Major, the Sargent, Ezekiel Bigelow, and all the rest of them, live in their works. Who knows but that they are even more beneficent and wise than the world and ourselves have ever dreamed. On reflection, we are more and more inclined to the opinion, that we have been designedly abused in said writings, on purpose to excite public attention and commiseration towards similar abuses experienced by us, every day, from thousands and indeed millions of others in this country. If this afterthought be true, we most cordially take back whatever of severity we may have indulged towards these deep-planning benefactors. We cannot but

entertain agreeable anticipations. From the unfound boundary of remotest Maine; yea, from the furthestmost point of "Away down East," to the Southwesternmost corner of that *Hurrah-Land*, called Texas,—we extend our visions of amelioration. We behold pedagogues and parents making use of the *Downing* writings as a text-book, whereby to illustrate the bad usage of their faithful servants, ourselves. Or at least we behold them watching the bad habits of their own lips, and most sedulously correcting the bad habits of the young as often as they may appear. Now, Sovereign Masters and Mistresses, and Rightful Owners, shall these visions of hope be realized? Shall the condition of our suffering brethren be ameliorated? Shall the era of good grammar, correct spelling, and proper pronunciation, be hastened forward by some benevolent exertions? Shall the present abuses be transmitted to the future or not? Shall the Golden Age of Speech speedily come, and last evermore?

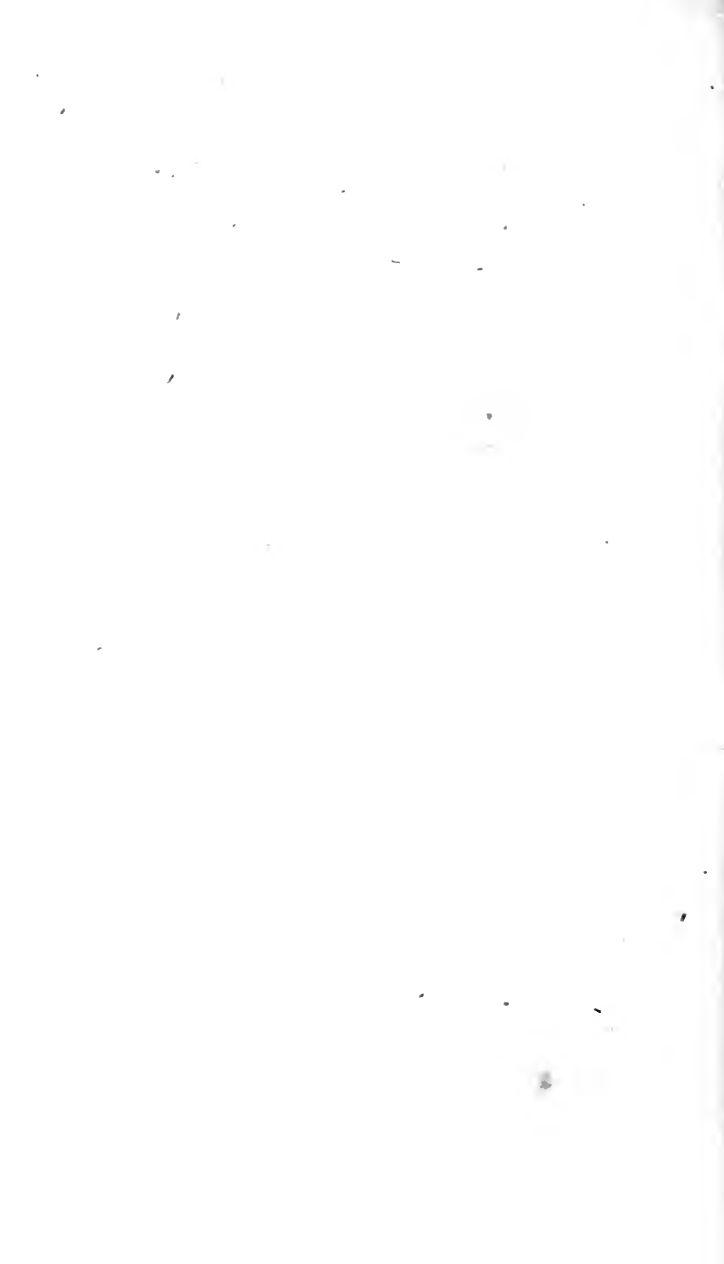
That such improvement in their condition may be vouchsafed, is the humble prayer of your supplicants;—all whose names, being too numerous to be here subscribed, may be found recorded in Webster's great Dictionary.



A TRAVELER'S STORY,

FOR THE

PERUSAL OF PARENTS.



A TRAVELER'S STORY.

A GREAT mistake is often committed by parents in withholding their patronage from schools at home, close by their own doors, and giving it to those further off, whose merits, or rather demerits, they are not sufficiently acquainted with. "'Tis distance lends enchantment to the view," and oftentimes, distance only. How often are the young sent to some boarding school, and thereby exposed to serious physical and moral dangers, simply because the seminary, as it is called, is fashionable, or is seen through the magnifying medium of a swelling newspaper advertisement, or the extravagant puffery of the personal but ignorant friends of the principal of the establishment. There are, no doubt, many excellent institutions of the kind referred to, and youth, at a proper age, may be sent to them with advantage; but I think that younger children should be kept at school near home, if the school is at all worthy of patronage. If such a one is not to be found, then let parents spare no time or money in endeavoring to make the

private or public school of their neighborhood worthy of receiving their precious offspring.

But my present purpose is not to write a dissertation, but to tell a story illustrative of parental error.

I was about leaving one of the smallest cities of our country in the three o'clock stage, on a clear summer morning. The agent's man, accompanying the driver to pick up the passengers, carelessly informed me, as I was about to take my seat, that there was a young lady in the stage, going about fifty miles, whom her father, Mr. —, wished me to have a little care of on the way. I was somewhat surprised, for I had never heard of either, before. It seems that the father had been to the stage office and learned that a gentleman, and one only, was traveling in the direction his daughter was to go, and had such confidence in his integrity, as to send his request through a second, and even third, person. It occurred to me, that most careful parents would have done the errand directly to a stranger, even at the expense of losing some hours' sleep.

On entering the stage, my only fellow-travelers appeared to be three females, hidden from distinct view in the more than twilight darkness of the back seat, one of them seeming of the stature of a little girl. One of the two others I supposed to be my confiding and confided protégé. But not having a direct introduction, I waited for the plainer daylight, to make us mutually acquainted. It was

truly a pleasant incident to a solitary man, hundreds of miles from his home, to be intrusted with such a charge. The fine spirits inspired by the fresh beautiful morning, were rendered still more buoyant by anticipations of agreeable companionship. A rare chance, thought I, to set my face homeward with a summer's day peeping and blushing upon me, and a young lady, withal, to shed brighter and rosier beams from life's morning countenance. What delightful chit-chat, too, for these fifty long miles! I shall pretty soon have more touching and lasting music than the passing twitter of these early birds. Intelligent, sociable woman is a warbler who will not take to silence with those of the bush, but will warble the day through; at least, I have seen and heard some such, and I trust here is the like, nestling in the corner back of me. Conjecture was on tiptoe; indeed, I began to grow quite romantic about the personage whom the friendly light would soon present to my acquaintance. Well, we had passed the city borders, and the opening day in the open country had sufficiently dispelled the darkness of the curtained vehicle; so I turned round, to see what sort of light might be reflected from the countenances on the hitherto-mysterious back seat. And now, behold, ensconced in the two corners were the wrinkled faces, and crisped forms, and chocolate-colored dresses, of two quite elderly women. The fathers of these daughters had long been in their last sleep, so it could not be one of them whose parent had intrusted her to

my honest care. But between these monuments of the past sat a little miss of ten or twelve years of age. So, here must be my charge, whom my fancy had been romancing about, and comparing to all that was fresh and beautiful in the young day. Her cheek truly emulated the dawn, and her blue eye out-beamed the morning star; and a few years' advance among the teens, might make her all that one could wish as delightful companionship on the road; but here was a mere child, and my duty was probably to see that her inexperience did not betray her into danger, and to keep her from crying, to her journey's end. "Well, miss," said I, after a civil nod to the elderlies, "so you are the young lady whom I have been requested to have the care of on the way?" "Yes, sir," replied she, "I am going as far as —, to school. I have been spending the vacation at home. Father found that a gentleman was going in the stage, and he thought it might be well to send word to him about me. Had there been nobody going this morning, I should have gone fifty miles all alone." "Pretty young, seems to me, to go so far alone, or with strangers," remarked the milder faced of the other two; "I should not like to have a grandchild of mine sent off so." "Nor I," briefly came from the thinner and closer lips of the severer-featured other. Not much more was said till we arrived at our first stopping place; for the school-miss seemed rather sad, and no wonder, thought I. Here she ate her breakfast, as if her appetite had been left at the table of her home,

where the eater ought still to have continued, as I soon had reason to believe.

After a few miles further, my elderly companions left the stage to the sole occupancy of Miss and myself. We had scarcely got our first jolt in the roomy vehicle, before I perceived the child sobbing, and in tears. "What is the matter, my young friend?" "O, I don't want to go to — ; I hate that place. I wish mother would let me stay at home ; I want to be with her." And then she sobbed the louder, and the little blue fountains poured out on the bloom beneath, such waters of bitterness, as, long-continued, would have blighted that beauty of health and hue.

But childhood's tear-springs are happily not deep, and are soon exhausted. My sympathies could not but be most keenly awakened. I was led at once to make inquiries about the school to which she was forced to return. In the first place, I learned that the little sufferer loved her mother exceedingly, and her highest happiness was to be in her society. Next, I was told that she was laughed at and treated unfeelingly, by her instructors, when she was homesick, and cried. I inquired minutely into the customs of the school, and I found that they were unfavorable to health. The time after rising, before breakfast, was occupied in their private rooms,—the bed-rooms ; and the breath of health abounds not, immediately, where the exhalations of sleep have been going on for seven or eight hours. Soon after the first meal, the pupils are imprisoned

in the school-room till mid-day, with the exception of a very brief recess. They must sit just so straight, and in that constrained position by which flexible-framed and many-jointed nature is so sorely pained. A number of the seats were without backs, so that the backbone was the only backing some of the poor creatures had for their aching bodies. Then the half hour before dining, in the summer's hot noon, was not very appropriate for bodily action, and at no season was particularly devoted to needed exercise. The afternoon was passed also in the same dull, uninteresting, and constrained routine. "Oh," exclaimed the little tender-hearted narrator, in describing her seat and posture; "oh, I have such a feeling here," putting her hand to her bosom, "that I can hardly breathe, sometimes. Then I have no appetite to eat, and I am sick after my dinners. Oh, I don't want to go back. Do let me go on with you, sir. No, I beg you would hire a horse and chaise, and carry me back to my home. Or get me a buggy, and I will go alone, if I don't get home till midnight. I had rather do this, than go back to school. I shan't be an atom afraid." And then she cried again, and would not be comforted. My heart was moved. I then resolved that I would tell the story to the public, for the good of poor little sufferers like this.

But why was this lovely child sent away, fifty miles, to a heartless boarding school? Because it was the fashion; and the schools near home, though

some of them were very good, as I had before learned, did not exactly suit the parents, who seemed to be entirely ignorant of the manner in which schools should be conducted. From the little girl's artless account, they had found fault with the very salutary methods of an excellent school. And what were the studies that were pursued at such a distance, and at the cost of nearly two hundred dollars a year? Nothing, I found, but the ordinary pursuits of reading, writing, arithmetic, and grammar, with the exception of a book on commerce. From this she probably learned something about the various productions of different countries. She learned about things appertaining in part at least to the other side of the globe, and which would be better understood at a maturer age; while the phenomena of nature, and the common processes of art, close by, were a perfect mystery. I set to questioning the little student of commerce, and she knew nothing about the common grains, fields of which we were passing, and from which was her daily food. How they differed or grew, how they were sown or harvested, she knew not. Of the clouds over her head, the rains dropping at her feet, and the heat and the cold affecting her body continually, she could give no good reasons. She thought the clouds were great bags up in the sky, holding water which once in a while got loose, through some sort of holes, and tumbled down in the shape of rain. She knew not how butter, or cheese, or a thousand things, were formed, which were made at doors all

around. I asked if she had been in a gristmill. She had only seen the outside of one in the vicinity of her school. Her mind was sent across the ocean faintly to conceive of sugar-making, for instance, while she was not led to observe with her own bodily senses as interesting processes of manufacture taking place within two minutes' walk. At the same time, she was suffering from the want of that exercise which excursions into fields, and shops, and mills, would have afforded, together with valuable and pleasant instruction. The only time at-all appropriated to all-important exercise, was a brief period about sundown; and this was occupied, at best, by a short and sauntering walk, and it might be whiled away within doors, if indolence so preferred.

My story is done, excepting to add, that I saw my sweet little companion left at the door of the seminary where, for a moment at least, she forgot the hated school in the welcoming kiss of two or three fellow pupils,—perhaps I ought to say, fellow sufferers. Just at parting from me, she strikingly showed how easily her good affections might be drawn out, instead of being repressed, and her naturally amiable temper kept sweet, instead of being soured. Among the last words of her truly musical voice, were, "O, sir, I wish you would tell me your name, so that I may write to mother how very kind you have been to me." The name was given her, together with a most friendly and pitying good-by. I traveled on to my destination, lament-

ing that the subject of education should be so little understood by those who ought to know the most about it—parents. I was more convinced than ever that the most proper place for the first stages of education at least, is within and around an affectionate and a judiciously careful home. For the sake of mere fashion, or acquisitions which the head is not yet old enough to understand or yet to need, why should the tender heart of childhood be wrested out of its warm bosom and cast into the distant cold?



THE MOUNTAIN TOWN

AND THE

MAGNANIMOUS BOY.



THE MOUNTAIN TOWN, &c.

THE love of gain is well known to be a predominant characteristic of the people of New England. It possesses the souls of many like as an indwelling spirit, impelling the will and giving direction to all the energies. It enters the man in his very childhood, and oft-times puts down and keeps down that benevolence, which all, in a greater or less degree, are born with, and are intended to manifest in numberless ways, blessing and being blessed. At least, if kindly and spontaneous sympathy is not hindered, how often is its purity corrupted, its beauty tarnished, by accompanying or after-coming thoughts of detestable selfishness. Mammon will stand close to the heart-fountain, to catch the impulsive, stainless gush of charity, and make a bargain out of it. For instance, I have known the single occupant of a carriage *invite* the wearied or hurried traveler to take a seat by his side, and then at parting receive with chuckling satisfaction the bit of silver which the benefited felt prompted in gratitude to offer.

I have known men leap with pure sympathy's uncalculating quickness to the aid of one caught in sudden trouble, and after carefully bestowing relief, go away seemingly more glad with a trifle of heart-cursing lucre than with the good they had done. How pitiable is this insensibility to the worth of that benevolence, which not only quickens spontaneously into action, but abides without a single after-thought of selfishness. Its own consciousness is sufficient reward. But besides this, with what consequent and unalloyed gratitude from the recipient of favor is it blessed. Still farther, the prompting feeling,—the performed good,—the touched affections, the sweetened tones, the softened looks of a fellow-being are all laid up, rustless, uncankering treasures, in the heaven of remembrance. What a damnation is worldliness to itself! There is not much hope of breaking this insensibility in gain-hardened men. Gain-hardened they will live and act, and thus they are likely to die. But oh! that tender childhood and docile youth might be saved from this money-taint, this metal-crust of the heart. But alas, how numerous the instances of early hardening! A boy but picks up and runs to you with your pocket-book, yea, nothing but your handkerchief, almost the instant it was dropped, and then trips away rejoicing in the curse of your coppers, and not in the sweet little blessing of the kindly deed. And parents—I have seen *them* manifest a foolish pleasure, indeed it should be called a vile, baneful sympathy, when their child has

bounded into their presence joyfully exhibiting the lucky prize occasioned by another's misfortune. While he slips the *douceur* into his incipient purse, or drops it upon the little growing pile in his chest-till, he wishes perhaps that such chances might come often, and these guardians and guides of his immortal nature seemingly wish the same.

No doubt there are many, many instances, wherein the young do not prove traitors to their pure, spontaneous sympathies, by taking pay for their exercise. One such instance I once experienced myself, and for encouragement to the pure, and example to the perverted, I will relate it. Sometimes a good deed is so associated in our minds with peculiar circumstances, that we ourselves, if not others, deem it to have uncommon significance and value. It is so in my mind with the one in view. But first I would say something of the town wherein the scene to be described took place; for that town is dear to my heart from the many delightful hours, yea, days, I have spent there with a clerical friend, whose good-doing and excellent example I shall directly have occasion to mention. He will forgive me, I trust, for pointing to his light, which, though shining clearly and very brightly before men, men may not see, although it is before them.

The town of ——— lies upon some of the boldest, roughest hills of New England, surrounded by scenery of the most imposing character. A few miles to the eastward arise mountainous piles, and

ridges of picturesque grandeur. Southward, towers the solitary, dark, blue summit of one of our grandest mountains. The steepled and columned church is loftily, and so peculiarly situated, that its roof sends the rain-drops on one side to the Merrimack, and on the other to the sea by the opposite channel of the Connecticut. From this airy elevation the eye, looking westward, first falls upon one of those numerous ponds which gem with crystal, and enchantingly mirror, these wilder regions. On one side of this water ascends a woody steep, made bold by rocky cliffs. On another a hill rounds up, and softens beneath the touch of agriculture. On a third side, to the spectator in a particular position, the adjacent monarch of the hills seems to shoot his pinnacled supremacy into a skyey depth, which the watery reflection arches with the infinite magnificence of reality. Far away on the western horizon is discerned the line of the Vermont mountains, romantically diversified with extended ridge, rounded summit, and heaven-piercing peak. Such is the glorious scenery by which the Creator informs the minds of many, and inspires the hearts of some, in these retirements. One would think, that love and awe toward alluring and soul-commanding nature would here modify and hallow the all-possessing spirit of gain. Whether it be so or not is doubtful, for the hard, stern soil begets a habit of industry and persevering acquisitiveness, which the beautiful and grand would hardly counteract in most minds. The narrowed soul will not look out of its insignifi-

cancy and turn from its petty purposes, although God's mightiest messengers in creation present themselves majestic at its casements or thunder at its portals.

But the particular town just described possesses other advantages of an intellectual and moral character, which cannot but have some good effect, especially on the young. The schools, I believe, are in an unusual state of forwardness, owing in some degree to a liberal fund left for their aid by a former wealthy clergyman of the place, now deceased. Libraries too were the subject of his benefaction, if recollection rightly serves. But the most distinguishing means of improvement, are the efforts and personal character of one of the present clergymen. He has been settled somewhat over twenty years. Very early in his ministry he commenced a juvenile library, which has steadily increased, and is the largest collection of the sort that I have ever seen. Through this, a universal taste for reading has been generated in the young mind. All under the age of thirty, down to childhood, cannot but have received improvement from this, and manifest it in their conversation and daily walks. Libraries of a higher character have also been established under the direction of the same individual. One of these is worthy of particular mention, as it is uncommon, viz., a scientific library, including all the volumes of one of the great cyclopedias. The farmer at his fireside, perusing works like these, is surely in a fair way to get the better of that all-prevailing mammon-service, of which complaint has been made.

Again, my clerical friend is a devotee to the natural sciences, and by example and precept has disseminated some taste for these subjects among his people. With Botany, and particularly Entomology, he is minutely familiar. When his parishioners come to his study to exchange books, (he being general librarian,) they occasionally linger over the cabinet of insects, shelves of minerals, and collection of plants and flowers, thereby themselves catching a taste for the charming studies of nature. It is particularly interesting, to observe the children hang with wondering delight over the glories of the floral kingdom and the insect tribes, before they trip away with their exchange from the book-shelf. The little folks are thus led not only to observe the flowers of the field more critically, and to chase the "blossom of the air," as Bryant calls the butterfly, but to look sharply after the comparatively despised bugs of the sod, and worms of the dust,—finding the Divine skill, beauty and perfection, where most never think to stoop for them. Now and then the little philosopher imagines he has found a specimen, which his Minister does not know of, as he has not seen it in his collection, and away he runs to surprise the good man with his discovery.

I trust that I shall be pardoned for giving such publicity to the character and efforts of a man who, in his exceeding modesty, would shrink from notoriety. I do it for the effect such an example may have on others similarly situated. See what good may be accomplished, what measures of enjoyment

be possessed, by a clergyman, though in the utmost seclusion from both the fashionable and the literary world, as it is called. Here, at the distance of seventy miles from the much desired advantages of the city, and forty miles from even a rail-road,* and on the rough steep hill-sides, is a living lesson which should not be lost on those clergymen who pine after the pulpit of the city, or the populous village. My clerical exemplar makes no pretension to graceful gesture, rhetorical flourish, or any thing like commanding eloquence. Neither do the hills perceptibly tremble beneath his pastoral tread. Yet, like the sunlight and the dews, what changes does he accomplish without making any noise, or startling the world to stop and gaze as he operates. And like those agents of nature which are the stillest though the mightiest, such a man works without mention; the lesson of his example is unheeded. It is lightning and torrent, in the spiritual as in the material world; which make men cry, lo! here, and lo! there. They are sudden, intense, and perhaps astonishing in their action, yet how brief and narrow are they, comparatively, in beneficent effects. I would by no means however assert, or imply, that special, occasional and tempest-like exertion may not be useful. Let those who are capable of such art, according to their capabilities, do good in their own way. I would simply suggest, that those who cannot compel week-day business to stop and

* Rail-roads have now been laid up to a point much nearer our friend's abode.

enter into, and be affected by, their operations, should not be so lightly esteemed in comparison, as many seem to think. I would present to those who cannot astound with great things, an example of accomplishing great, yea, greatest things, without astounding. For is it not a great thing, yea, one of the greatest, to take the inhabitants of a remote and rude town, and not only lead them in the ordinary ways of religion, but guide them to the study of all the Divine works, from the minutest, creeping at the roots or unfolding at the tips of the herbage, to the mightiest, which circle and shine in the celestial immensity? Is it not glorious, so to teach and exemplify, that out of nearly infant mouths, not only evangelically, but scientifically and philosophically, the praise of God is perfected? Let those who say, yea, go and do likewise, and great shall be their reward.

When I began this article with an allusion to the gain-getting spirit, and with the fore-mention of an instructive incident, I did not anticipate that so wide a space would intervene before I should come to my story. But that scenery burst anew and so inspiringly on my conceptions, that I could not but describe it; that friend came so dearly and instructively into remembrance, that I did not like at once to dismiss him. And now, as an introduction to my incident, I would remark, that I am pleased to imagine that the part acted by the above-named individual, in the culture of the young, tended to paint the incident with its moral beauty and to point it with keen instruction.

Early one summer morning, I was traveling in a chaise through this mountain town. I had arrived near the outskirts, when I fancied that I heard a singular noise, but did not then stop or look out to see what it might be, as I was in particular haste to my destination. I drove rapidly on. But soon the noise again startled my ear, and seemingly the shrill scream of a human being. Still driving on, I leaned out of the vehicle to learn whence came the piercing sound. I then discovered a boy pursuing me at the top of his speed, and crying after me to stop, which I now did. He came up nearly exhausted by half a mile's run, with his bosom all open, and his face all reddened with the heat, and reeking with perspiration, and he pantingly exclaimed, "You are losing your trunk, Sir." At this information I leaped out, and surely my trunk was in a deplorable condition. It had been fastened beneath the axle-tree. But one of the straps had got broken, and it was dangling by the other now almost wrested off, having been knocked against the stones and dragged through dust and mud till it was a sorry sight. I requested my benevolent informer to stand at the horse's head till I should put it into safety. Of course such a boy, or any boy, could not but do this under such circumstances. When ready to start again, in spontaneous gratitude I held out a piece of money, of more tempting value than our smallest silver coin; and lo! the little fellow drew back, and straightened up, and with a keener eye, and almost an offended tone, exclaimed—"Do

you think I would take pay for that?" I could not prevail on him to receive the least compensation. I went on my journey, rejoicing in the accident, although it was to cost me the repairing of my torn and bruised trunk. It had made known to me one *magnanimous boy*. For, how many much slighter favors had I received from the young, who capered away insensible to the pleasure of doing a kindness, in the satisfaction of "taking pay for that." Ay, thought I, this boy is an honor to the common school; he is a Christian learner in my friend's Sunday School; he is a diligent reader of the juvenile library. Blessed pupil of a blessed pastor! thy getting is the true and the best one, that of understanding; to thee, "wisdom is the principal thing." How many, many times since, have I thought of that boy, and wished that I knew his name, and could trace his onward course. How many times, in my wanderings and stoppings within sight, even within the most distant glimpses of the peaked crown of that proud old hill-king, have I thought of that grand, that royal-spirited boy. That mountain, by natural association, is to me a most fit monument to one magnanimity towering above many meannesses.

Ye boys, and indeed ye men, of our country, to whom the moral of my story may apply, I pray you, when you shall perform a little favor spontaneously, or even by request, let your souls stand up in true nobility—in the heavenward grandeur of disinterestedness, and say in the spirit, "*Do you think I would take pay for that?"*"

THE

LIGHTHOUSE OF LIGHTHOUSES.



THE LIGHTHOUSE.

It was a bright, glad, summer afternoon, on which, by invitation, we were seated in a carriage with a party of young friends, all of them as bright and glad as the day. Our aim was a magnificent sea-view at Marblehead Neck. We love scenery, as did also our company, and we should like much to describe the delightful pictures of land and water on the way, and the ocean grandeur at the termination of our ride. But we have in our present writing a particular and rather uncommon theme for public attention ; so to this we will confine our pen. We came to gaze on the dark, blue spaciousness of the waters, but we found that which sunk deeper into our memories and hearts than this, inasmuch as it was a sort of unexpected discovery, fraught with instruction profitable to go with us through life.

There was the Lighthouse—our fair companions must look at a novelty like this. As the lofty sea-beacon could not come up to the city, it was not

well to lose the opportunity of visiting it on its rocky stand. So thither we turned our steps, just to take a glance, as we supposed, and then away. As we gazed towards the little cluster of buildings occupied by the keeper, we could not but observe the air of convenience and neatness of every thing around. The first object of a domestic nature we arrived at was a little yard, the home and bed of the family cow of a summer night. Every thing about it, down to the stool of the milker and the fastening of the gate, arrested our attention on account of the ingenuity of contrivance and cleanliness of condition. We passed through an enclosure, and over what would be called a lawn, if fashion dwelt there, and came to an outhouse, where the keeper was industriously mending a sail. He seemed about sixty years of age, with a sky-blue eye, and an expression beaming therefrom as bright and kindly as a star. A plump chest, and a full, ruddy cheek indicated that threescore years seldom rejoiced in happier health than in him who now welcomed us to his premises. We found him most agreeably communicative concerning matters around, of which we wished to know. Some of his intelligence we should like here to put down, would our principal aim allow us time and space. At the slightest expression of our desire to see the lighthouse, our entertainer conducted us to the edifice. But before we describe the spectacle at its top, let us first touch on things below. The old shop where our friend labored was a pattern of neat-

ness. The various implements there sheltered, were arranged in the utmost order, and there was so little dust that our ladies could sit on bench, block or old timber, without the slightest soiling of garments. We could not but observe, as we passed, the exceeding tidiness of the dwelling-house, not only in front, but on the back side where less exposed, and so also of all the appurtenances around. Had it been the summer retreat of city opulence, whatever else might have been, there could not have existed an order and cleanliness superior to the present. The fences of rude stones from the pastures and shores were not disfigured by unsightly gaps at the top, or rubbish along the base. The little patches of cultivation showed not a weed, to steal from the useful vegetables the nutriment of the soil, or the now needed dews from the air. These little spots, won and softened from sterile nature, forcibly reminded us of what we had read about Swiss industry and thrift.

Now to the tower. The keeper leads us up the stairway, which is as clean as if all the maids in Marblehead had watched over its scrubbing, or the notable witches of Salem had nightly trooped over it with their brooms. We reach the lantern, and find ourselves encompassed by glass, with a July sun blazing in with melting potency. But we scarcely heed our bodily discomfort, so interested are we in the objects before the eye, and the explanations kindly proffered to the ear. The floor is of stone, and as unsoiled and polished as the

hearth of a drawing-room. There are ten lamps, if we rightly remember, to be kept burning from twilight to twilight. Of course, there is the daily business of filling with oil, and the nightly care of snuffing the wicks and keeping them at their best flame. In these operations all know the liabilities of spilling oil and of dropping the black, filthy snuffings around. Yet there was not the slightest appearance of any such mishap or carelessness here. The stand of an astral in the most tasteful home could not less have betokened the above-mentioned processes, than did this dome and every thing therein,—although so secluded and unexposed to visitation. The metal and glasses of the lamps, and all the complicated machinery, were as free from all soil as the genteel housewifery could desire in the domestic domain. The reflectors corresponding with the ten lamps were of the highest polish, and reflecting, as some of them now did, the direct rays of an intense sun, our eyes could hardly bear their dazzling brilliancy.

So much for appearances. Now how came they so perfect, so unequalled by any similar establishment that we had ever seen? In the first place, the keeper had an innate love of order and neatness, or he had trained himself thereto. Besides this, he exercised an inventive talent and constructive tact, by which he produced numerous little contrivances for abbreviating labor, and by which he avoided those uncleanly nuisances which otherwise might have accumulated. But chiefly, he was moved by

a determination to do his duty to the utmost, and more even than his employer, the Government, would ordinarily consider his duty. He would conform not merely to the common custom and expectations appertaining to his post, but he would ascend to the mark prescribed by his own lofty conscience. He would gratify, moreover, those delicate tastes, whether inborn or acquired, which in another situation, and with wealth, might have spread beauty around, and collected elegancies within the costly mansion for the entertainment of refined acquaintance. As it was, he made the most of his position. He might say with Paul, "I magnify mine office."

And now, a word as to the compensation of such faithful care, and gratuitous, unnoticed, unpraised propriety. This man had once held with honor the responsible station of Gunner on board of one of the distinguished and victorious vessels of the last war. He had been for years in the perilous service of his country. He still serves the public in this seclusion for the stipend of four hundred dollars, together with the use of the little plot of land and buildings appertaining to his charge. A miserable reward for such industry by day, and watchings by night, and solitude at all times! Here he must abide, not only through the more bland and agreeable seasons, but through the long, long, dreary winter, cut off from church and school in the town by an arm of the sea. He must not only be at the expense of boarding his children out for

their education, but be deprived of their dear society, so cheering to the loneliness of father and mother. If sickness suddenly invade his dwelling amid the wintry tempests, the pitiless elements are almost the only comforters that can well approach from without. Four hundred dollars! Any lighthouse-tender should receive more than this to compensate him for his privations. But this noble old patriot is deserving of a thousand dollars, as much as hundreds of other public servants who do nothing but easily tend upon goose-quill and fool's-cap in carpeted offices, surrounded by all that makes life pleasurable. The Government should grant him at least a premium for his example. His lighthouse not only directs the seaman on his dangerous course, but were its superior keeping known and commended, it might be a lighthouse to the lighthouses on all the coasts and isles of the seas, shining conspicuous above them, and illuminating the way to perfect management.

But still farther, our hitherto obscure friend should be known and honored, if not more substantially rewarded, for his fine moral qualities, and their exemplary influence. Where such rare order and purity prevail in an establishment like this, so unexposed to human observation, we may be quite sure that more than common propriety reigns in the mind that here presides. He who thus magnifies his office cannot but be of magnified soul. We ourselves deeply felt the teaching of his example. We seemed to be girded by a new energy to return

to the duties of our own sphere, and strive to the utmost for perfection. We resolved to contrive a remedy for inconveniences, instead of complaining of them; to seize on all profitable opportunities, instead of indolently letting them pass by our folded hands. Now let *our* office be magnified. Let our lamp be polished and ever trimmed and burning to the brightest, whether the world witness or not. So help us, Infinite Father of lights!

We cannot but remark before closing, for the sake of an interesting association of ideas, that we learned the name of this pattern beacon-keeper to be Darling. On the announcement, our minds at once recurred to the heroic Grace, and her father, whom we had lately admired for their adventurous feats of mercy on the British coast. This man, we will hazard to say, would exhibit a kindred spirit in behalf of suffering. Here is a magnanimous nature crowned with an honored name. We now commend Captain Darling to "the powers that be." Let them at least cause his example to shine close before all of similar vocation, from Eastport to the country's last Southwest.

But, good old friend, noble patriot, as faithful in the deepest seclusion of peace as in the glare and plaudits of war! it matters not to thine own soul, except in the desire to extend improvement, whether thou shalt remain unnoticed or not. Let a Government inspector visit thee but once a year, and praise, and straightway forget thy merits; let President and Secretaries never hear of thee; yet

this cannot prevent the lofty stand of thine own consciousness. Thou wilt still do thine utmost duty in thy rocky solitude. Thine own several virtues shall commune together rejoicing, and speak thee peace. And to our fancy, if not to thine, the seas shall send up their white-plumed surges with tones of approval. The sunlight and the showers shall aid thy neat husbandry with almost a conscious gladness that they are blessing the meritorious. The clouds shall not over-shadow thy spirit with darkness, and the clear heavens shall look down with starry eyes of kindness as thou punctually arisest to trim thy beacon-flame, whilst the commerce-blessed nation whom thou servest takes unbroken sleep. But a purer era is coming. Then shall true worth be better known. Secret things shall be proclaimed from the house-tops. "The first shall be last, and the last first." The great moral world shall wake up in its undying spirit and anxiously ask of such, "Watchman, what of the night?"

NOTE.—In the republication of the foregoing article, the writer would take the opportunity to remark, that a wider observation might have found upon our coast other lighthouses and other keepers that would have excited perhaps equal admiration.

THE DARK OF AUTUMN
AND THE
BRIGHT OF WINTER IN NEW ENGLAND.

At the request of Miss Leslie, for an article from the present writer, the following was contributed to her "Gift," of 1836 ; but the name of the author, usually attached in such cases, was accidentally omitted. It seemed proper to make this statement, that the authorship of an anonymous piece taken from the Annual, might not be supposed to be claimed without right.

THE DARK OF AUTUMN AND THE BRIGHT OF WINTER IN NEW ENGLAND.

I HAVE a cousin born and bred in one of the West India Islands. How I, a New Englander, happened to have such a relative there, matters not to my story. Of course, I had an uncle ; and if you only think of the sheen of a Spanish dollar glittering upon the eye of acquisitiveness, you will not wonder that my uncle married and settled in a climate so different from that of his nativity. Well, this cousin visited his father's relatives in New England, for the first time, in the summer of the year 18—. He spent some months with us, for the purpose of crowning his mercantile education with some branches not so well acquired in his native island. The early part of December was the time set for his return. He shuddered at the very thought of exposing his tropical organization to the severities of our winter. He began to shiver with cold, and to curl over a fire in serene September. The calmness and southwestern softness of our Indian summer, with all its "pomp of hues," could hardly reconcile him to our frosty nights. As the

cold season advanced, he began to grow desperate. He rolled in his extremities, as the leaves do, by the potency of frost. Finally, he betook himself to some friends in the city, for he supposed it might be rather more comfortable amid brick walls and a sea-softened atmosphere, than it was so far to the north, and so high in the sky, as was our hilly town. Yet he made us one more visit, previous to sailing for his own dear clime of the sun. He would not have dared a chilly journey of more than fifty miles into the country, but here was his father's birth-place, and the home of his ancestors; and, more than all, he really loved us, as he found that the Granite State, where we lived, had imparted nothing of its stone to our hearts.

The day our tender-bodied friend arrived, was the very last and the very gloomiest of November. The aspects of earth and sky were to most natives, as well as to the tropic-bred, about the same for cheerfulness as the circumstances of a funeral. Indeed, death in unburied deformity was everywhere around, in respect to the vegetable tribes. Field, pasture, and woodland, in summer so variously beautiful, were now all dark and desolate, in the last stages of autumnal decay. And, to multiply the images of mortality, our West Indian, in jocular spleen, said, that the trees were like lifeless skeletons, with their bare and cold bony limbs rattling against each other in the wind. No wonder that even these long-living giants of vegetation looked, also, like the dead, to an eye accustomed to perennial verdure.

The visible heavens, moreover, shed down no consolation for the departed life and comeliness of earth. The sky was ceiled around with leaden, and still more darkly blue clouds; forming, as it were, fit dome for those malignant powers of the air that deepen pensiveness into melancholy, and force despair into suicide, in some unfortunate temperaments. The waters, too, which will sparkle in the clear sun as cheerfully as when the vernal leaves put out over them, or the summer flowers grace their borders;—they had caught the sadness of the season, and seemed to reflect from their bosom the chill of the clouds, as well as their hue. There was wanting only one circumstance more to give to the day the last and superlative degree of cheerlessness, and this was that blue breath of the sea-demons, the northeast wind.

Such was the day on which our visitor from the torrid zone arrived at our door, with his face, hands, and heart, all im-blued with its influences. After our cordial salutations and genial fireside had repossessed him with comfort, we spent a right merry evening, making him feel that ours was no unfavorable climate for hearts.

Just before retiring for the night, it was observed that the clouds had closed mistily together, and were drooping lower, betokening some kind of visitation from them before morning. But the temperature was just at that point at which the most infallible almanac-maker dare not be more positive than to say, "Rain, hail, or snow, or some sort of

weather before long." Next morning we were surprised to find that about four inches of snow had fallen during the night. It was quite remarkable that the first snow should come exactly with the first day of winter. The sky was now as clear as on the first morning of light, before a cloud had been made, or a mist had gone up. It was truly one of the most beautiful days that ever dropped from the sun. Now, thought I, cousin Ferdinand will behold a sight such as he never saw before, and one worth traveling for far, and tarrying for long. I roused him from his slumbers, that I might be sure to witness his surprise. As the white curtains were let down so as completely to cover the windows, he did not perceive the change that had taken place, before he left his chamber. I contrived to get his half-opened eyes to the door before he discovered it. I suddenly flung the door wide open, and let the unexpected scene upon his startled sight—a landscape of spreading plains, oval hills, and peaked mountains; yesterday so drearily dark, but now all arrayed in the purest white, and bounded by the soft contrast of the azure heaven. As there had been but little or no wind, the snow had fallen as even as ever the hand of art had laid the carpets of a palace. And it had descended so gently and moist, that it lodged wherever it touched. All the fences were edged, and the posts were capped with white. But the trees were the most curious spectacle. Every branch and twig, before so naked and black, was now clothed and bright

with this bloom from the skies. Here and there curling tendrils, and more pendent boughs, making one think of flowery wreaths and festoons. At the moment, moreover, the rising sun was just gazing from the horizon on the white expanse, which gave back into his own rejoicing face the perfect reflection of all his harmoniously mingled hues. Such was the scene which broke with the suddenness of enchantment on the young man's vision. He would scarcely have been more astonished and enraptured had he fallen asleep in our dismal north, and awaked to gaze on the flowery paradise of his own native isle. Indeed, had equatorial Flora herself been here, she might have been consumed with envy, as well as been congealed by cold. For there were forms and colors which she could not equal, with all her skill. The surface of the frost-work was one boundless continuity of the minutest prisms, all radiant with the seven-hued light, as if powdered with particles of rainbow. Certain I am, that in all nature there is not a texture or a tinting more exquisitely delicate than this ; it is the nearest approach to the spiritual that the human eye beholds in things material.

I need not record the ohs and ahs, and all the extravagant superlatives, now uttered by my bewildered and transported cousin. He found no more fault with the manifold and uncomfortable changes of our capricious climate. He felt that autumn's darkest, might well be endured for the sake of beholding winter's brightest, enhanced by such a contrast.

I might now describe the pleasures of the sleigh-ride we gave our novelty-struck tropic man. I might speak also of the new life and gladness infused by this snow-fall into our rural population, making the feet of business dance to the jingling melodies of the merry bells. But I can now sketch but a single scene from the snow-bright season. However, I assure all dwellers in the sunny south, that one might fill a volume, describing the beauties and sublimities, the sports, comforts and delights of winter in New England.

SCENERY-SHOWING,

IN

WORD-PAINTINGS OF THE BEAUTIFUL, THE PICTURESQUE, AND THE GRAND IN NATURE.

“ So my friend,
Struck with deep joy may stand, as I have stood,
Silent with swimming sense ; yea,
* * * gaze till all doth seem
Less gross than bodily ; a living thing
Which acts upon the mind, and with such hues
As clothe the All-mighty Spirit when he makes
Spirits perceive his presence ! ”—*Coleridge*.



TO
GEORGE B. EMERSON, ESQ.,

PRESIDENT OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF INSTRUCTION.

DEAR SIR,

The germ of the present little work was a Lecture delivered before the body over which you preside, in the summer of 1841. The favor with which it was generally received, and especially your own warm commendation, in respect to its useful tendency toward the end in view, have encouraged me to this enlargement and greater finish. I now beg the honor of dedicating the humble volume, through your name, to SELF-CULTURISTS, to PARENTS, to SCHOOL-TEACHERS, and to those SCENERY-SEERS who can already say,

“With a pervading vision—Beautiful!
How beautiful is all this visible world!”

With the highest respect,

Your obedient servant,

WARREN BURTON.

May, 1844.

*



SCENERY-SHOWING.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

"How lovely, how commanding ! but though Heaven
In every heart hath sown these early seeds
Of love and admiration, yet in vain
Without fair culture's kind parental aid."

AKENSIDE.

SCENERY is the appearance of things to the eye. The term is here applied to objects on the face of creation, so disposed by form, color, dimension, or arrangement, or by several of these circumstances together, as to afford peculiar enjoyment to the beholder.

There are some, predisposed by constitution, or of fortunate early education, who scarcely remember the time when their souls were not pleasurablely alive to the beauty, picturesqueness, and grandeur of nature. The perceptions of others are awakened at a later period, and then they never cease to rejoice, as at the opening of a new sense, to a divinely adapted, unalloyed, and sinless gratifica-

tion. But the majority of people spend life in the midst of a thousand things thus interesting, and seem entirely unconscious of the charm awaiting their reception. An awful thunder cloud, a glorious rainbow, or a magnificent sunset, might be noticed because it is occasional; but many less striking phenomena, and nearly all the permanent aspects of nature, might as well not have been, as regards fitness to please by their scenic appearance. This inadvertency is not from lack of faculty to admire, or of time to observe, but because attention has never been specifically directed.

Now, notwithstanding the dormancy of the taste in view, we believe it may be aroused in most, to receive at least satisfactions happening in the way, if not to go with amateur zeal in search of the distant.

The aim of our humble work is to awaken perception and relish by presenting appropriate objects. It is a Scenery-showing to those who have not much contemplated this boundless field of happiness out-spread by skill and beneficence Divine. We would supply a place in reading which has hitherto been nearly or quite vacant. We hope, however, not to be altogether unacceptable to those whose taste has been already developed, and even to a degree far higher than our own. The faint word-paintings on our page may serve at least to recall to conception scenery at the time beyond convenient reach; to aid them to live over again, in mind, unsinching, heaven-like moments, when they stood

in admiration, love and joy, to receive into vision its choicest riches. We trust, moreover, that our endeavor may stimulate such readers to benevolent activity in a similar direction. We now respectfully but earnestly enjoin on them to embrace every opportunity to lead others to a good which Providence has before vouchsafed to them, as by especial favor.

To the less initiated and the entirely unappreciating, we now turn address. With a directness of speech, pardonable from sincerity of motive, we entreat them to a diligent self-culture in the respect now presented. It is remarkable how a taste for scenery will grow, with pleasure deepening upon pleasure, if it is only steadily and repeatedly directed. It is with the mouldings and tintings of nature, as with the pencilings of art, the more they are studied the more they win and fasten the attention. The several points of interest—figures, hues, lights, shades, proportions—come into clearer and clearer distinctness; indeed they seem to move visibly out, as it were, into the nearer presence of the sight, as coveting to be observed and to confer enjoyment. With the ordinary mental endowment, any one will find valuable reward for such employment of leisure. Those of an organization more particularly predisposing, have only to look, to love to look, till their taste shall grow into a very passion. We beg leave to illustrate by a passage of experience. But first, we would take occasion to entreat the candor and kind regard of readers, so far as not

to impute an egotistical obtrusiveness, if they shall find other personal references by way of illustration, or increase of interest. We know that incident infuses life and entertainment into description, which otherwise might be too quiet and less readable to some; and if the incident is personal to the narrator, and modestly presented, it has an air of fresh truthfulness far more absorbing. Then the spirit of the writer, thereby, is more present and real to the spirit of the peruser, and they go along together in more sympathetic companionship. Having thus humbly deprecated criticism on our self-personalities, we introduce our first instance of the kind.

Not long ago, after a month's travel in a portion of country new to us, and therefore keeping our perceptions in constant exercise by change of objects, we returned to Boston, and to lodgings in a tame, unsightly street. But the prevention of our customary pleasure was quite a discomfort. The city seemed like a very prison. As the nearest remedy, we took to the Common. It never before seemed so charming, although we had sauntered there a thousand times, rapt with its surpassing loveliness. It was now a perfect paradise, in contrast with the stiff, dead wood and brick, from which we had escaped. We were surprised, moreover, to find that our perceptive faculties had remarkably gained in concentration and particularity of attention. We observed the individual form and altitude of tree, the bend of bough, the circularity or the angular juxtaposition of branches, the

fleeces of foliage, the hue and shape of skyey interspaces, with a distinctness that was a marvel. There we stood under the great dome of elm at the centre, and gazed up into its leaf-walled labyrinth of crookednesses, and conned them this way and that way, all round and all through, as we would the lesson of a book. The very pathways, before rather tiresomely straight, now pleasantly invited the eye by their slight but clearly defined turnings to and fro, and undulations up and down, as if in gentle sportiveness along the verdure. But, O, this verdure, soft as velvet, rich as emerald, spreading between the brown foot-courses, and lying up along the terraces, how it caught the eye into its lovely embrace and held it.

Our faculties for the picturesque and beautiful had been at school with nature for weeks, and they had not only grown in affection for their mistress, but had been measurably developed, just as the organ of number or tune may be, by practice and reiteration. Indeed, we believe that one might learn to live in and be lost in the enchantments of scenery ; the sense swimming as it were in its own boundless element, drinking in therefrom, unsated, ever growing in strength, widening in capacity, and perpetually coveting for more.

To parents and teachers we now turn in particular address. We would allure their eyes to seek and fasten delighted on those scenes in nature now about to be presented through the dim medium of language. Let them be sure to lead to the same

contemplation the tender ones under their responsible charge. We beseech them to reflect, what pure, blissful tastes they may call forth from their ready and waiting minds ; to consider with solemn conscientiousness, what foul desires, low vanities, and unworthy images, they can exclude from the immortal capacity, by opening it wide to receive the radiant benefactions of the Father of lights.

We have also a word of injunction for those of mature age, who have only themselves particularly to care for. We would ask, Ought the training of the young to be a matter separate from even their attention and sympathy? Every child belongs in some sort to every other individual near, inasmuch as he may make or mar the happiness of every other by his character and conduct. Is not moral darkness a lack and discomfort to all beholders? And does not moral brightness shine out pleasingly to all eyes? Yes, all have a direct interest in the education of the young, not only for their own sakes, but for the special good they may confer. Line upon line, precept upon precept, may be given in instructive conversation. A lecture, from those now addressed, on any useful subject, will be as valuable to a juvenile group, or to a single individual, as it would be from parent or school-teacher. It might be even of more worth, inasmuch as the unexpectedness of the instruction will make it more impressive and rememberable. We make application of our hints to the topic of our volume. How might they excite observation, and develop a taste

for scenery, in almost any youth present to such attraction. How he would ever afterward, delightfully remember them as the first perhaps to make him aware of such pure enjoyment. We know that they can do this, and that children will not be dull or ungrateful listeners. A portion of our own experience shall illustrate.

In the summer of 1842, on a pleasant afternoon, we had occasion to visit a house situated on what are called Roxbury Highlands. The friend we sought being at the time absent, we wandered out into the neighboring grounds, well known to be charmingly picturesque, from their alternate culture and wildness. Our ramble brought us to a clump of trees shooting up from a soil-covered cliff. Beneath the leafy covert was a rustic seat, convenient to the lounging body and the looking eye. And there commenced an adventure, which we now turn to account. Here were two boys, of ten or a dozen years old, one of them the son of our friend. They seemed to have provided for a long afternoon in their shady perch, by a store of bread for luncheon and a book or two for amusement. The sight was gladdening. The future literati of our land they might be, wise enough already to know that fragrant earth and fanning breezes were elements of healthy growth both to body and spirit. They might be two embryo Howitts, who would some time write "Rural Life" in America. At first our new acquaintances were rather shy, seeming to prefer alternate snatches at their bread-feed

and book-feed to our conversation. But we knew how to take boyhood, and we quite soon dropped into their companionship, as easily as we might have dropped with them on the greensward. We contrived to get them into our own current of entertainment, which was scenery-seeing, and they took to it marvelously, entirely forgetting their loaf and literature. If we recollect right at this distance of time, there was near by, a tree of singular appearance. They had before observed it as curious; and now, excited by our own interest in the object, they descanted on it with surprising volubility. They were now ready to follow the pointing of our finger or the guidance of our footsteps anywhere. We showed them a narrow field, with a grey fence at one end and a cliff at the other, if we remember, and on each side a grove, walling it up with thick-set trunks all regularly round, and over-towered by interlapping foliage. We made them gaze at the spectacle till they thought it beautiful, and seeming almost like a very picture in a book. We then went down to a brook that stole out into view from a bridge-shadow and flowed beside a dusty road, and we gazed down upon its ripples and the stones and pebbles that spotted and specked and roughened the bed beneath. They seemed interested in the sight. At any rate they looked, and looking was a discipline that would lead into pleasure. We came back and ranged below a long high cliff overtopped by trees. We tried to make them feel the picturesqueness, although they might

not have understood the word by which we now express the idea. We are certain that they caught the desirable emotions. Indeed the boys grew lively and emphatic in their admiration of the various features of the landscape. We were soon joined in our rambles by a little girl, the sister of one of our companions, and she too caught the spirit of our pastime. They all, with glowing faces and beaming eyes, ran through the groves, scrambled up rocks, getting a peep here and a peep there; then they mounted up a wooden prospect-tower in one of the grounds for a wider view and still new objects, exclaiming at the different points, see here, or see there, and isn't this, that, or the other, beautiful, or grand? Thus we were held till it grew quite toward evening, and we were obliged to leave the most elating companionship we had known for many a day. A large portion of the zest might have been the result of mere animal spirits, yet there was withal a kindled and still kindling love for scenery; we know it was so, and in consequence of our success we truly wished that there might be such an establishment as a Scenery School, and that we could be appointed Professor of the charming science of the Picturesque. A few days after our adventure, we met our friend in the city, and he gave us one of the most cordial looks and greetings that ever gushed from his benevolent aspect. "Come," said he, "and spend a week with us at Roxbury; the children want to see you." The egotism of recording this commendation is pardona-

ble, we trust, as it is necessary to the completion of our narrative, and to point an illustration with the most convincing evidence,—the desire to see us again and for days together.

In closing our preface we will just add, that we long to have children led to gaze on, and study, and intensely enjoy, pure, sinless nature, as we did when a boy, without a guide, yea, all alone, amid the scattered farm-spots and rocky and foliaged solitudes of romantic New England. O, that we could ourselves be bodily present to them all, and with finger, and eye, and tongue, direct them to whatever is lovely in the less, magnificent in the larger, and grand in the mightier scenes of our multiiform land. Would that we could inspire their souls with an enthusiasm like that which gives something like a portion of paradise to our own. We trust, however, that soon there will not be wanting to most, alert scenery-show-ers, who, by glowing words, in tones of love-melody, and by sweetly eloquent looks, shall convey to their souls these purest of visible gifts from the Invisible Giver.

CHAPTER II.

MORNING.

"Hail holy Light, offspring of Heaven first born!"

MILTON.

"The morn is up again, the dewy morn,
With breath all incense and with cheek all bloom,
Laughing the clouds away."

"Most glorious orb that wert a worship, ere'
The mystery of thy making was revealed!
Thou earliest minister of the All-mighty,
And representative of the Unknown—
Who chose thee for His shadow!"

BYRON.

FIRSTBORN of the lovely in nature is the light. The most sweetly, winningly fair of the day, is the dawn. The most purely glorious of effulgent exhibitions, is the full-kindled morning. We place their pictures, therefore, near the entrance of our gallery, as fittest to greet the visitor to its series of shows. At first, there is but a peep of light, like the gleam of an eye, answering to your own with tender, cheerful welcome. Now a wider flush. Anon the beaming spectacle runs into streaky length, like a changeable ribbon, hemming the horizon. It brightens up more broadly, and glows and glows, varying its hues almost while you wink. Perhaps tufts and bars, or fleecy curtains of cloud,

add a garniture of bewitching tinges. At length the spacious East is one vast court of magnificence. Central amid the pomp, the solar monarch rolls royally up with his chariot of changeful flame. The auroral heralds and all the rainbow retinue gradually retire from ministration at the presence, and the Day-King in solitary potency possesses his realm. Human eyes, dazzled to blindness, must now turn away to pursue their duty by his reflected and softer light.

In the summer, simultaneous with this spectacle of the sky, is another, which sceptres with all their power could not command, or wealth with all its money's provide or equal; yet, outspread for millions to enjoy, the poorest as well as richest, will they but look. It is the all-bespangling and sparkling dews. They begin to glitter with the first glimpses from the orient. They awaken even with the day-star, and gently acknowledge its tender beams. But as the dawn advances, how the beaded prisms glorify the herbage. Had we microscopic eyes, every drop would appear to reflect the exact morning, with all its changes on atmosphere and cloud: aurora beholding herself multiplied to millions, by millions of dewy mirrors.

Our sketches are dedicated to the soul through the eye. But accompanying this freshest blazon of lights, there is a luxury for the ear with which we would enhance the allurements of the scene. It is music; music such as first from living breath greeted and satisfied man in sinless Eden; the "charm

of earliest bird." At the faintest appearance of day, a few of the heaven-taught melodists have caught it in their peering sight and are stirring among the branches. Hark! like prompt choristers, here and there in their leafy coverts, they are setting the tune for the general orchestra of the morning. A brief pause; then a great orison goes up from amid the yet twilight-dim trees, seemingly in

"His praise who out of darkness called up light."

Come out, then, thou into whose eyes not only, but into whose immortal soul-depths the shining may be! Come out, not only to gaze but to listen. The most ancient and the holiest visible temple is re-illuminated and specially adorned for this sacrifice. Freshness and fragrance float as the incense, and imbue the breath of life and of vocal expression. On the grand hosanna, as a tuneful chariot, fling thine own grateful worship, to roll upward to Him, who would have from thee a melody of the heart, harmonious with those angels whose kindred thou art, for whose companionship thou art designed, and who,

"with songs

And choral symphonies, day without night
Circle His throne rejoicing."

CHAPTER III.

VERDURE.

“Gay Green !

Thou smiling Nature's universal robe !
United light and shade ! where the sight dwells
With growing strength, and ever new delight.”

THOMSON.

THE rich scenery-seasons open after the repose of winter with the hue thus described. Of all the family of lights, it is the eye's chief favorite. It holds the sense the longest without weariness or satiety. It is the wise fiat of nature that her “universal robe” should perpetually please. Yet a taste for the enjoyment of this color might become more deep and intense than it generally is. We wish that we could somewhat present its attraction to the less cultivated and careless observer through the medium of language. We paint as it appears to one loving the verdure with a very passion.

The spring very gradually produces the hue, sprinkling it here and there, as if the uninured sight might be oppressed with its own luxury, were there suddenly presented that boundless bounty at length cast abroad. At first, perhaps, a verdant line may be discovered close under the sunny side of abodes, as if seeking domestic protection from the yet liu-

gering cold. The tender creature may be found also nestling in some warm little hollow, where the eye may leap in like a fondling from the surrounding brownness. That relic of the winter, the snow-drift, softening under the subtle heat, is made to distil into nutriment for this emerald child of the sun, and it embraces its dying nurse with its tender contrast of beauty. Now a witching stripe is traced from where the streamlet steals out from its source, and

“is faintly seen,

A line of silver, mid a fringe of green.”

There are also large mats of spreading verdure in more sheltered nooks. There are fields of more fertile soil and sunnier aspect, which soon present one broad, unbroken expanse of the new herbage. Here the vision can leap into the clear, bright depths, and as it were, swim along bathed and imbued with its best adapted and most delicious element.

In the early spring and in the later autumn, when vegetation was just peeping from its root, or was withering back again to its root, we have ourselves often walked to a considerable distance to gaze on the young grass that thickly carpeted a warm hillside, exposed to the enriching drainage of buildings above. This firstling of the vegetating fields, when contrasted with the adjacent and dusky bareness, was a perfect fascination, a very elysium to the sight. It is some years since we dwelt in the vicinity of this particular spectacle, yet how often has it

spread its soft witchery to our conception. It has been a pastime to recollection amid the perplexing cares, indeed a very solace amid the troubles of life.

But we must hasten after the progressive season and finish our vernal painting. The delicious color widens through the valleys, sheets over the hills, runs up and enfolds shrub, tree, and the whole of the great woods, till all is one wide emerald magnificence. The sight is now satisfied but not cloyed with one continuous color. Indeed it finds a sort of ecstasy in the vastness of its single-hued range. Let it repose near by, or journey all round and afar, it is boundless, beauteous green.

CHAPTER IV.

PICTURES OF NATURE AND OF ART.

“Beauty—a living presence of the earth,
Surpassing the most fair ideal forms
Which craft of delicate spirits hath composed
From earth’s materials—waits upon my steps ;
Pitches her tents before me as I move,
An hourly neighbor—Paradise and groves
Elysian—Fortunate fields—like those of old,
Sought in the Atlantic main—why should they be
A history only of departed things,
Or a mere fiction of what never was ?
For the discerning intellect of man,
When wedded to this goodly universe
In love and holy passion, shall find these
A simple produce of the common day.”

WORDSWORTH.

THE eye may be profitably trained to observation by all things visible whatever. And in many of these, which are generally unnoticed, there may be found a scenic pleasure worth securing. For the sake of discipline, we would carefully notice any little protuberance that knobs, or hollow that indents the land, and indeed any distinctive lineament or point on the surface. All colors, with their shifting lights and shades, all plants, shrubs and rocks, however lowly and uninviting amid more imposing things, are worth the scanning, if for nothing more,

at least to gain in minuteness of attention. But even where two or three of these are in juxtaposition, there is a sort of picturesqueness which may afford an humble pleasure of appreciable value to the studious eye. Wherever we are, almost, we may be at our discipline and some degree of enjoyment. Suppose we are standing leisurely at a dwelling door. There is perhaps the stone-paved or pebble-strewn walk, running down to the gate; or it may be nothing but a little path, foot-worn upon the turf or into the unsodded soil. There is a real picture-like beauty in this, as contrasted with the planted borders, or the plain herbage through which it passes. There is moreover the fence around; it matters not if it be a rough, broken stone wall, or of rudest boards or bars, all askant with age and neglect. Their odd shapes, careless positions, patches of moss, and old weather-stains, are worth looking at. Indeed, when the likenesses of these are skillfully portrayed by the pencil, they are considered beauties. Surely the accurate observation of such substances will at least prepare the taste for the artist's imitations.

We beg leave to detain the reader a little by a few remarks about such productions of art, together with some practical hints appertaining to the scenery-shows of nature.

What an admirable picture! exclaim the tasteful, contemplating a fine landscape from the artist's skill. Beautiful! exclaim the less tasteful, in view of coarser or the coarsest imitation. How pretty!

cries childhood over almost any thing of the kind. Educated and ignorant, older and younger, find enjoyment in pictures. One reason probably is, that the presentation of a picture is occasional, and it has somewhat the novelty of an incident about it, and therefore seizes on the attention with a sudden grasp, as things occasional and incidental generally do. Another reason may be, that a picture is a little spectacle separate from every thing else. It is not amalgamated with and lost among innumerable other spectacles of a similar kind. The eye easily runs round its limits and dwells on its few particulars undisturbed by multiplicity. Besides, one feels the wonderfulness of imitation and resemblance; feels, though perhaps not much thinks, what a curious fact it is that the appearance of real substances which stand up from the ground and can be grasped with the hands and climbed upon with the feet, may be put on a surface of unvarying flatness, and be made almost to seem the very things they copy.

Now, we believe, that with the exception of the circumstances of novelty, resemblance and admired skill, all the pleasure found in a picture may be afforded by original nature. All creation presented to the eye is but a vast painting, a spectacle of colors with lights and shades. Let the illuminations from the heavens be shut out by night and clouds, and no artificial ones of earth be instead, and the whole vanishes, never more to exist, unless these illuminators again lend their aid. It is the

experienced consciousness of substantial matter, having definite size, shape, and other qualities, and also of the different distances of objects, together with the multiplicity and universality of colors, that prevents the mind from the truth that all is but color that the eye beholds, to be gone in a moment, bereft of this.

The commonness of the spectacle, moreover, deprives it of interest ; but if the eye does pause to observe, it is often confused and bewildered in the complexity and variousness, unless it be disciplined to particular inspection. Again and again, therefore, we commend any aspect of nature, any little portion of earth, with its few objects above, to studious observation. Roll up the hand and look through at the space thus separated from other things, and the attention will be thus concentrated and distinctness acquired, as in a gallery of paintings by the little tubes there provided for visitors.

Gaze, gaze, discipline the perceptions, and with a constantly growing pleasure shall be verified the poet's encouraging thought, that things beautiful are

“ A simple produce of the common day.”

CHAPTER V.

SWIMMING FIELDS—DISTANT FENCE-LINES—OPEN ROADS
—WAYS THROUGH WOODS.

“A thing of beauty is a joy forever ;
Its loveliness increases ; it will never
Pass into nothingness, but still will keep
A bower quiet for us, and a sleep
Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing ;
Therefore, on every morn are we wreathing
A flowery band to bind us to the earth.”

KEATS.

WE now present a few more ordinary appearances, not without scenic interest if but observed with the spirit felt by the bard, or which by culture may spring up in almost any one not a bard.

Most have noticed how a day or two of rain, such as we sometimes have in summer, will drench and saturate the fields with wetness, so that the herbage, while it freshens to a livelier green, seems as it were to be buoyed up by the liquid element that fills it. After a parching drought, how the thirsty eye drinks and luxuriates in such a spectacle. Rainy-day idleness might here snatch at least a sip of pleasure ; and the tasteful traveler would somewhat forget the drizzling clouds in such a refreshment of vision.

The straight stone wall dividing green fields is a pleasant object to look at, especially if the roughness be lost in the distance and the fence appear as a dark smooth line marking the verdure. In the many positions of fences relative to each other and to the grassy level, the standing grain, the rounding hill, or the tall wood, there are various interesting aspects, which to the uninitiated need to be pointed out with the finger as well as described in language.

There is a picturesque beauty in a simple road, with a strip of herbage for a border and a grey wall for rim, then on either side, the expanses of field or pasture verdure between which it runs. We have many a time stopped and gazed with a very desirable pleasure, at a little fragment of road thus circumstanced, rising white out of a valley and curving over a hill and then again lost. Indeed the richest picture in the gallery of art would not tempt us to exchange for its possession the capacity of enjoying the scenic beauty of a dusty highway, only let it be far enough off to give its best display, and nothing of its dust.

A word more about roads. Take one stretching straight and far through a wood. As it runs on and on, its vista of whitish bottom, verdant walls and skyey roof, seem to narrow and narrow toward a point, the perspective in the distance diminishing to miniature like a picture.

There is also the winding path through the woods. You turn this way and that, and perhaps

undulate up and down. New objects burst continually on the view, and the eye must be busy to catch them. You wonder all the while what will come next, and where you shall come out, like as in the fortunes of a romance. Then when you at length emerge, the brighter light and the broad, clear lands seem like the happy conclusion of an uncertain story. By a cultivated relish for appearances of this sort, how might we lighten the tediousness of travel. How, catching words already quoted from the poet, we should find beauty waiting on our steps and pitching her tents before us as we move, an hourly neighbor.

CHAPTER VI.

A DOMICILIARY SPECTACLE.

“Me, oft has fancy, ludicrous and wild,
Soothed with a waking dream of houses, towers,
Trees, churches and strange visages, expressed
In the red cinders, while with poring eye
I gazed, myself creating what I saw.”

COWPER.

WE have a poet's warrant for the first scene of this chapter ; and if the reader has perused the observant and graphic Cowper, the rest will not be without interest, although the dear old bard has not painted it on his page. He loved almost every possible show in nature, and he who has caught the spirit of his muse will require of us no further apology. Twilight, and at the fireside ; no lamp, no book, no work ; need the space be lacking of interest to the solitary sitter ? Let him watch the glow of the intensely ignited coals and realize the soothing waking dream.

As the fire works round and through the fuel, how the eye, aided a little by fancy, perceives all sorts of fairy shows, a miniature theatre of shifting scenery. But the portraiture of our quotation suffices for this ; so we pass to another.

Suppose it bright day time, when hue and motion

are more distinctly visible, there is the smoke, that accompaniment of flame, not particularly desirable for comfort or cookery, yet it is not undesirable as a spectacle of color, form and motion, to a child or anybody else. How mysteriously copious the vapor steals out from the apparently solid substance, of a whitish blue, from a green stick, curling and mingling with the darker blue of the drier. With what grace it turns, and twists, and bulges out its fleece after fleece, and then unrolls and shoots more straightly up through the flue.

There is another smoke-scene from the chimney-top worth beholding. Take a still autumnal morning, with what stateliness the creature rises into a tall perpendicular column, as if it stood compact like a tree, yet every particle is in motion; then there is the spreading out and folding over at the summit like a canopy, sometimes the whole diversified with noticeable varieties of color in the sunlight. How often, when but a child, have we watched this ordinary exhibition. The eye would be caught by the wreathy wile, and be borne up and up till released by the unrolling of its fairy-like vehicle, when it would return down and be furled and wafted up again; then perhaps it would scud away and sport along a bank of the blue vapor piled in the lower air. No possible genius of the pencil could create that combined witchery of form, color and movement, on the canvass; yet it soars above the poor man's house as well as the rich man's, and might equally amuse the children of

both, and be a sweetly remembered pastime of early years, and withal be pleasantly renewed to a scenic taste ever afterward in life.

CHAPTER VII.

ROCKS AND CLIFFS.

"Stop, stop! Let that rock alone." * * * "It is a little feature on the landscape's face which gives it expression."

WORDSWORTH.

Rocks are striking features of landscape, particularly in New England, yet how little are they thought of, except by a few, in respect to the interest of scenery. By the grown-up they are mostly regarded as useful materials for walls, or as incumbrances and impediments, wished out of the way; to children, they are play's ambition-pinnacles, on which to climb high and stand up tall, or from which to leap boldly down in the friskiness of animal spirits, as the lambs do in the pastures. True, rocks are an impediment to tillage, and let them be got out of the way. They are good for fences, and let fences be made of them, but this is no reason why their picturesqueness, their beauty and grandeur, should not be observed and enjoyed. I know some rocks that are much in the way, and it might cost a month, take a life through, for the shoes and wheels of business to go round them, and if split up would underpin a meeting-house or

a market, yet we would not remove them any more than we would pull a star from the sky, on account of their perpetual blessing to the eye of taste.

Now let the perception be trained to enjoy these prominences of the ground. For this purpose any rock of the nearest field may afford the primary lesson. Let the different and peculiar dimensions, shapes and colors, be noticed. There are the little picturings of moss, the stripe caused by some diversity of the original elements, or the fissure which, though small, allures the eye by a sort of mystery in its depth and shadow. These trifling circumstances might be made interesting at least to the child whose taste for things of the kind has not been crushed and annihilated by the great and the grand of broader experience. A minute observation of these insignificant peculiarities will discipline the perceptions to be minutely observant when going out into wide and multiplex nature, where, otherwise, attention might be confounded and lost in a roving, bewildered gaze. Besides, we apprehend that an observer thus disciplined would be more likely to entertain the feeling of sublimity and wondering romance, at the subsequent spectacle of mighty gorges, crags and pinnacles, so vastly exceeding the diminutive things to which interest had previously been limited.

We would form a sort of friendly interest in rocks; let the heart grow to them, as it were, in consequence of pleasant remembrances. An anec-

dote will somewhat illustrate our meaning. A friend informed us that when in Europe, he visited the celebrated Wordsworth. The poet took him round his grounds, showing him the points of engaging scenery with poetic rapture and patriotic pride. While walking in the garden, some laborers there, were about prying up, for removal, a rock in a grassy corner—an ordinary rock, which stuck out from its bed with a perpendicular and grey mossy face. "Stop, stop," cried the owner, "let that rock alone." He then remarked to our friend—"I would not have that rock removed on any account. Insignificant as it may appear, it signifies something to me; my eye has glanced at it and gazed on it for years; it is a little feature on the landscape's face which gives it expression. It shall now have an appropriate inscription on its little grey weather-side, and I will write a sonnet to it." The patriotic poet spoke with a fervor about that old rock, which surprised the American.

Now the poet's rock was dear to his heart, simply from long familiarity. To this kind of interest we would join that of peculiar associations. On a first visit to a rock, read passages from some favorite book, peruse perhaps the last new work of pure-minded genius, or be accompanied by an agreeable friend for the sweet of mutual converse or song and sympathy of taste. In this way how will memory be starred, as it were, with softly gleaming points to which the soul shall in the future turn back and find solace from the darkness of trouble, or the chilly and stumbling night of extreme age.

One of the most interesting fragments of scenery the eye scans and perches on, are the cliffs in our hill-sides. Many a home in our diversified country is not without one or more of these in vicinity. Perhaps they are set smoothly and perpendicularly into the earthy framework, like a piece of hammered masonry, and clad with green and gray moss, as with fanciful tapestry. Or they project roughly and beetle over, impressing the feeling of grandeur. Perhaps shrubs shoot out from crevices, or bristle at the top in fantastic wildness, or trees tower therefrom in waving pride at their pre-eminence. Sometimes the rock-show is of quite a clear whiteness, or has spots or stripes of chalky brilliancy, charmingly contrasting with the grassy carpet beneath and pendant foliage above. Now let observation be particularly directed to such noble features of the landscape. Let us grow romantic about them—it will do no harm. If some interesting incident of the past may be found connected with them, or with any other spot of earth, so much the better. We cannot but repeat that on a pleasure-seeking jaunt to such spectacles, a choice of company is truly worth the seeking. One or two individuals of tender and touching conversation, or the gift of sweetening song, are far preferable to noisy, gamboling numbers. Let all the feelings be spiritual and quiet, rather than animal and frolicsome, especially on a first visit. Thus you will open in the soul a little fountain of sweet and tender recollections, which shall be perennial,

and sprinkle its freshness at length, it may be, on withering age.

Indeed, we would have all sorts of pleasing scenery connected in the mind with the most agreeable remembrances, but most especially, the scenery around dear native home. We would labor sedulously to make the grounds there a sort of Eden-place to the affections. Then in after life, when parents shall be laid in the dust, and brothers and sisters scattered widely away, what a paradise of heart-hallowed beauty, will this native landscape be !

CHAPTER VIII.

HILLS AND VALES.

"The Hills of New England
How nobly they rise,
In beauty or wildness
To blend with the skies !
Their green slopes, their grey rocks,
Their plumage of trees,
New England, my country,
I love thee for these !

"The Vales of New England
That cradle her streams ;
All greenness and glimmer,
Like landscapes in dreams ;
Their rich laps for labor,
Their bosoms for ease,
New England, my country,
I love thee for these !"

OLD SCRAP BOOK.

THE Hills and Vales ! the very words have a charm, embalmed as they are in the sweet essence of rural poetry shed all along the course of time. How infinitely diversified their appearances ; countless, countless shapes, as if the fingers of Nature had played over her continents in sportive invention, configuring the surface. There are broad heaving swells with conforming platters of land between ; long ridges lifting more suddenly, alterna-

ting with long gouges below ; and the more precipitous heights of all sorts of figures, looking down into dells of novelty equally diverse. The professed scenery-seer we need not advise, but to those who would seek his rare pleasure, we would say, carefully contemplate all their varieties of aspect ; con them like a lesson in a book. It is remarkable how the organ of form will strengthen and sharpen to its office. It will come to detect each one of all the multiplicity of outlines. Figure is its sole subject and enjoyment, and it will feast on the beauty of curves, with the relish of angles. There are sizes, distances and relative positions, for the note of other faculties, giving to each appropriate gratification.

There is another study in close connection, it is the conforming sky. From some nether stand among many hills, gaze this way and that, over and around, and how the azure dome is bordered at the base with jagged cuts, angled notches, quick-heaving arches, or long narrow scoops, according as the earth configures its own contour. Some relations of the land to the horizon, present most exquisite specimens of the picturesque. From one extremity of a long deep valley, peer away through to the other. A portion of the heaven is close down in there, like a sapphire wall, and it seems as if you might go and place your hand against it, or look through the crystal azure into mysteries beyond.

Color will of course mingle with and array the

charms of form and proportion, but as we treat of it elsewhere, we omit it in this connection. As this outline of the hills and vales meets the eye of the reader, his fancy will naturally clothe them in all their necessary variety of hues.

We spoke of the growth and pleasure of the mere perceptive faculties amid such interesting presentments of their specific objects. But there is above, and reigning over these, another power, to which these are the handmaids. Ideality, or the intense feeling of the beautiful, and the exulting glow at its possession. How does it open and open, amid such scenes, for streams of beauty to glide in, as from many fountains tended by its servitors at the eye. But over all these there is another sentiment, Religion, to which Ideality in duty should minister, sending up its joys thereto, beautifying holiness. He who worships not from this fane of hill and vale, receives not their charm into his highest, happiest sense, and he knows not what influence descends from the Worshipped and All-beautiful, to invest and sanctify the scene with a still richer loveliness.

We would now call attention to a few particular localities. There is a peculiar beauty about some of the hills of New England, which we fear are by many of its inhabitants hardly noticed. We refer to their oval forms. How gracefully they round up and curve into the sky. There are a hundred, or indeed a thousand eminences of this shape, in the neighborhoods of the Monadnock and Wachusett

Mountains. We will try to paint a scene embracing the latter. The Wachusett at twilight, and at other times in certain states of weather, is a very queen of mountain beauty, rearing its round, dark-blue summit against the peculiar sky. As the traveler crinkles among the hills below, it exhibits various charming aspects, and indeed seems alive and in motion, dancing as it were, to exhibit its graces. There is one playful illusion with which we have been often amused when in that part of the country. In ascending a hill in an angular direction, we would catch a first glimpse of the mountain, just a blue rim projecting beyond the green of the intervening hill. Rising higher the rim would broaden, or rather the body of the round mountain would seem to roll out more and more into sight ; the hill apparently wheeling one way and the mountain another, as if turning on an axis like machinery, by some invisible agency. It seemed to fancy that earth below were mimicking the dance of the spheres above, with a soft music unheard by mortal ears. Would not childhood, would not any one find recreation in this spectacle, enjoying and sympathizing with the sportiveness of Nature.

We never travel the old winding roads in the vicinity of Boston, without the ever-renewed pleasure of gazing upon the oval hills. We owe a tribute to these and all the scenery around. It has been our study and enchantment for years.

What valleys too, what water sheets ! What diverse sprinkles and clusters and lines of architec-

ture, peeping from amid gardens or gleaming under tree-rows ! Altogether, it is a show that the arid South, and even the magnificent West, might come over, just to see. It is the very poetry of landscape, and in spite of us its spirit and imagery will, but O how faintly, run verse-like along our page.

Kind City ! Can thy traveled son tell where
Lie sweeter scenes than thy environs are ?
Does e'er his soul so leap from self away
As when they greet him homeward from thy bay ?
The oval hills, the wandering vales between,
Groves, cliffs and ways, with glimpse of watery sheen,
And culture's carpet, rich as wealth can weave,
Tinged with all dyes that shower and sun-beam leave ;
Elysian landscapes round thy thousands flung,
Which, Albion owning, Genius would have sung.
Let Fashion forth then, Toil full oft depart
To *study* these, yea, get them all by heart.
'Tis Nature's *Athenæum*, full and free,
Its walls the hills, the meeting sky and sea.
At morn the Zephyr, Ocean breeze at even,
Brush o'er and air these pencilings of Heaven.
Should seraph Beauty beckon them to roam,
God's stronger servant, Health, shall bear them home.
Remembrance copies ; Taste, for aye, shall find
Those distant scenes hung round the halls of mind.
Send forth thy *poor*, of charities thou Queen !
And grace their souls as they have never been.
Thy teachers with them—learned of their Lord,
To show in nature lines of sacred Word.
Command thy merchant princes, large to give,
That lowly life may really come to live,
O, not "by bread alone," want's wrested good,
But all the spirit's growth can ask for food ;
Live in all beauty, eye or thought can find ;
Live conscious man, mid lordliest mankind ;
But more than all, live in sweet, grateful love
To those who lifted them, themselves above ;

To Him, who clad and sent with golden wing
Men, angel-like, "these little ones" to bring,
And fold them in their pinions at His feet,
Where rich and poor should all together meet.
Do thus, dear City—noblest of the North—
Of all the land, e'en now, for life's best worth!
Do thus, and then, thy populous robe all white,
With virtues gemmed, God's glory for the light,
Thy presence o'er a continent shall shine,
Yea, charm the poor, proud South to seek thy shrine,
In wisdom's meekness then to haste away,
To raise her darkened realms to brighter day;
Convinced of *equal* freedom's worth—the good
Of *other* chains—soft links of brotherhood—
Of wealth from toil at thought; of whipless awe,
Enrobed in love, but throned upon the law.
Erst Queen of Learning! take a loftier name,
The Era calls with its new tongue of flame;
A country's Prophet—lift thy baptized brow,
Thy mission prove, and do the mighty—NOW!

CHAPTER IX.

TREES.

“Bravely thy old arms fling
Their countless pennons to the fields of air,
And like a sylvan king
Their panoply of green still proudly wear.
When at the twilight hour
Plays through the tressil crown the sun’s last gleam,
Under thy ancient bower
The school-boy comes to sport, the bard to dream.”

H. T. TUCKERMAN.

WE now pay admiring regard to the lofty monarchs of the vegetable realm. Indeed they not only reign over the humble herbage and bush at their feet, but they hold a sort of lordship over the whole scenic earth. They stand above the water, sheltering its repose, or hold it in review as with purling music it moves on its train. They protect the meadows; they hold court in the valleys; they display upon the hills; they throne themselves on the mountains; and look down on the subject lands. We have spoken indeed poetically, yet without a figure we can almost say that we ourselves do a real homage to the trees.

But we must portray them more particularly as they appear in their princely bearing and attire. Each species has characteristic traits of appearance,

and if we may so speak, costume, features, and complexion of its own. What gracefulness of the locust and willow ; what column-like symmetry and stateliness of the maple ; what nobleness of the strong armed oak ; what arching grandeur of the elm ; then what varied magnificence of the great continuous forest.

How many different hues the practiced eye may detect in the common mantle of verdure. Here is the deep evergreen, fir or hemlock, set in among the beech, maple, or birch, or among several of the kinds together. How tastefully the darker and the lighter greens intermingle, rapturing the eye with their thickly intermingling, yet clearly contrasted hues. Take your stand on a height, and gaze down into some bosomed valley, thickly studded with trees ; maples for instance. Each one rounds up its top with a separate swell. The eye is allured ; and leaping down, it swims as it were in a sea of verdurous billows.

Another appearance of a wood is the shade it casts upon a bordering field or pasture, richly deepening its green. Stand outside, in the clear open light, and gaze upon the darksomeness that lies away under the umbrageous arches, and you might fancy a body of night left there to slumber, guarded by a file of out-skirting trees to protect from the incursions of the surrounding day.

A pleasant spectacle in the country is the fruit orchard, with its carpet of herbage beneath. At least we know of one who in very childhood gazed

with ever fresh delight on so ordinary a scene. There were the rows of apple trees, with branches so long, and foliage so thick, as to cast the intervening grass almost entirely into shade. The eye from the house-window would run along from this end to that, of one of the vistas, and back again ; then rest upon the leaf-shadowed verdure, anon start to and fro again, as if at a sort of gambol with its favorite hue.

It may be that the reader will not sympathize with us in the pleasure afforded by these common aspects of nature. If so, we would inquire if they would not please even him, when laid in accurate picture by a genius of the pencil ? Why then shall the Infinite Artist paint his perfect originals and the eye not see, the taste not admire ?

But we have one more instance of tree-scenery which cannot but attract the dullest vision, the tamest taste, when once made known. We have never seen it mentioned in print, or scarcely alluded to in conversation, and yet it is a spectacle as fascinating as imagination herself could invent or desire.

We refer to the peculiar aspect of the tree, standing between the eye and the morning, or more especially the evening twilight. Withdraw all consciousness from other objects, and fasten the gaze intently on the tree displayed against the golden, the purple, or the crimson of the sky. Mark how distinctly you perceive the trunk, and every bough, branch, twig and leaf—a perfect pencil-drawing

seemingly upon the glowing, changing canvass of evening. Or let the fancy take another turn. The object, particularly as the twilight fades, has a sort of semi-spiritual or spectre-like appearance, as if Nature were at a pantomime of arboreous apparitions for the entertainment of Romance at her most favorite hour. We deem ourselves peculiarly fortunate, when in an evening walk we can find a row of locusts, elms, or maples, or any kind or arrangement of trees, to disport the eye and fancy with, without hindering the needed exercise. There are few spectacles that keep us away from the topics of the study, and relieve the thought-worn brain more effectually, than this daily renewing illusion of the twilight.

CHAPTER X.

COLORS OF VEGETATION.

“Resplendent hues are thine !
Triumphant beauty—glorious as brief !
Burdening with holy love the heart’s pure shrine,
Till tears afford relief.
When my last hours are come,
Great God ! ere yet life’s span shall all be filled,
And these warm lips in death be ever dumb,
This beating heart be stilled,
Bathe Thou in hues as blessed—
Let gleams of heaven about my spirit play !
So shall my soul to its eternal rest
In glory pass away ! ”

WM. J. PABODIE.

WHY has the Creator painted our world with such infinite diversity, why so exquisitely spun the nerves of perception, if the one was not intended to run along the other with an infinite diversity of visual pleasure to the soul ?

We apprehend that immeasurably more might be enjoyed from the changing colors of vegetative nature, were there due discipline. Let us briefly present a few lessons for practice.

How many distinct hues of verdure in vernal vegetation. What numerous tints of the same color not only, but numberless different dyes, the

various species of vegetables assume, in all their changes from their first tender green of spring to the last prevailing brownness of autumn. Now let children be trained, let others train themselves, curiously to observe all these variegations from the shifting year. Discriminate each separate kind of grain by its hue. Notice also the alternations as the crop advances toward the harvest. Had we space, we might point out noticeable traits in each species. As a single illustration, embracing form as well as color, does one to a thousand observe the peculiar early beauty and later magnificence of that common spectacle, a field of Indian corn? There are the leaves at their broadest expansion toward the stalk, tapering off to their utmost elongation; and these all waving and fluttering in the breeze like so many verdant and pointed streamers. Then it lifts its tasseled stateliness, as if in plummy pride at the golden riches beneath.

There are the fields of the smaller grains. How graceful the nodding in the gentle breeze, in color, form and motion, minutely, multitudinously picturesque. While yet retaining their greenness, and in a bright day under a stronger wind, they seem to flow away in waves of silvered emerald. But in full and heavier ripeness, they roll magnificently along in billowy gold. The most enchanting view, for variety, richness, and spacious expanses of vegetable coloring, is a well-cultured farm, just before the earliest reaping. It would seem that the sun had mustered his hues to a gorgeous gala, in wel-

come to the gatherers commencing their long train of harvests. Come out, ye stived inhabitants of the hot city, for rural walk or ride; especially, ascend some neighboring eminence, and be enchanted. Pause, travelers, on the uplands overlooking the Connecticut river meadows. The sight will leap down upon those diverse, alternating stripes of luxuriance, and acknowledge the richest paradise it can find between the bloomy beautifulness of Spring and the foliage glories of Autumn.

The honors just mentioned as belonging to the two opposite seasons we scarce dare describe. Many geniuses have painted their perfections with an appropriate perfectness of language, which needs must forestall what would be here but a poor dappling of words.

Suffice it to say of the blossoming Spring, it is the queenly infancy of the year at the utmost exuberance of joyousness and gala. Soils, heats, waters, airs, lights, have all conspired in preparation, and still tend around for nurture, attire and embellishment. Odors minister incense, breezes fan freshness; the heavenly canopy varies with shadowy blue and the clearest deeps of azure; or it is decorated with lustrous banner-folds of cloud which, unfurling, shake down gems that perchance drop through rainbows, and then melt for the bathing of the favorite. The brooding parentage of feathered life carols gratulation. The streams purl, the foliage whispers in symphony. Human infancy laughs and claps its hands, and

leans in embrace on the flowery bosom of its own sweet, tenderly-beautiful emblem. The heart of maturer man glows, his face brightens in sympathy. The pageant passes, and the year stands up in the youthful stateliness of summer.

The grander pomp of the later season, finishing into perfect ripeness, or resting from its fruitful energies and rejoicing over its abundance, we cannot indeed portray. We will just dare an outline and lift away our inadequate pen. There is serene September, after reviving rains spreading a carpet of freshened green. It is as if there had fallen from the skies a carpet of summer verdure on which Autumn might drop its fruitage from its own yet green foliage. In these orchard-gifts, what richness, what variety of hues. It would seem that the tints of Spring had arisen from the perished blooms, and climbed into the branches and stolen over the products, anticipating the gust of palate by a feast to the eye.

But now comes the great, final display of orchard, grove, and forest pride. Go out, now, into nature, and let the vision run wild. Go up miles from the duller sea-lands, among the hills. Here are the nobler maple-woods in great congregation with their kindred kings of vegetation, but outvying all. The purple, crimson, orange, and gold of the morning; the bright, the deepening, and darkening changes of evening seem broken into fragments, together with rainbows unraveled, and all flung abroad in dazzling vestures, and these laced and

spangled with the silver glitter of waters. Glance through the valleys, gaze up the hill-sides ; stand upon the highest eminences and cast the sight down, spread it far away wide ; beauty, magnificence, glory ! the eye's largest and most ecstatic range in the luxury of colors. Turn upward in adoring gratitude to Him who holds in his hand the penciling sun, and paints this and all scenes for thee ; who also transfers his pictures to the vast halls of thy memory, to be fresh for recurrence through immortal ages. O lose thyself

“in Him, in Light Ineffable !

Come, then, expressive silence, muse his praise ! ”

CHAPTER XI.

WATERS.

"From deep mysterious wanderings, your springs
Break bubbling into beauty; where they lie
In infant helplessness awhile, but soon
Gathering in tiny brooks, they gambol down
The steep sides of the mountains, laughing, shouting,
Teasing the wild flowers, and at every turn
Meeting new playmates still to swell their ranks;
Which with the rich increase resistless grown,
Shed foam and thunder, that the echoing wood
Rings with the boisterous glee; while o'er their heads,
Catching their spirit blithe, young rainbows sport,
The frolic children of the wanton sun."

THOMAS WARD.

WATER makes a large portion of the world's scenery. In its various aspects of repose and motion, it is beautiful or magnificent. In its figured courses amid the diversities of land, it is the animate picturesque, running away with the eye, delightfully lost in wandering captivity.

We will begin with the most insignificant water-traits. They will be of use to the teacher, training the child to profitable observation. And why shall not the adult self-culturist also educate himself in these primary lessons of lovely minutiae. Let every one gaze on the rill, the brook, or the river, till he

shall be familiar with every characteristic, and learn to love the gamesome runner, as if it were a living acquaintance and had a responding spirit. Observe every short turn or larger graceful sweep. Pause over the little eddy or whirl produced by projecting bank or intervening rock, and look steadily till the eye gets lost in the little maze of ripples. A considerable water-fall is always an attraction. But even in the tiny rill we would notice the little tumult of waters gurgling over the rocks ; it is at least a discipline to the sight. Perhaps there is a slight cascade caused by a trifling stone. Or a chance-lodged chip or leaf may form a brief space of sheeted water, smooth and transparent as glass, and a very crystal, with the marvel of all its particles in motion.

Then there is the bason into which a precipitous rivulet may fall and stilly linger. Here the eye gazes down into the dusky depth until stopped by an impenetrable blackness, into the mystery of which it would penetrate if it could. Or there may be a bright, sandy bottom, so invitingly clear that it would almost seem pleasant to leap in and lie as in a bed beneath the glassy sheet. Sometimes such grot of the stream is so underlaid and margined with moss, fringed with herbage and overhung with tree-foliage, that the whole water is a deep delicious green. A poet might fancy the silvery strips, drops and sprinkles of the broken mass above, had been fused together again and transmuted into emerald by alchymy of haunting

Naiad. There is a spectacle of the sort in the Franconia Notch at the White Mountains, with which the author of Childe Harold, had he seen, would have gemmed his lay, attracting the traveling world to linger over its then classic loveliness.

The figure of a stream, as it adjusts itself to the obstacles of its course, has a peculiar charm. It seems to feel its way along with a cunning policy, combining convenience to itself and attractiveness to the beholder, as it

"Now glitters in the sun and now retires,
As bashful, yet impatient to be seen."

What grace, what majesty in the larger river, as from the narrow of the hills it comes widening out again, sweeping its shining train far round the meadow, then marching through the wood, or wheeling round the promontory, till fancy alone can follow the stately procession.

Then there are the thousand ponds, or lakes, as called in Europe, embosomed in our country. Holding the vision to an expansive unity of spectacle, silvering their blue under the sunshine, or darkening it under the cloud, they are the watery magnificent. The eye of taste owns them all. They are the fee simple of all the eyes in the nation, if they will but grasp and hold them with a loving sight.

CHAPTER XII.

SCENERY AROUND WATER.

“The visible scene
Would enter unawares into his mind
With all its solemn imagery, its rocks,
Its woods, and that uncertain heaven received
Into the bosom of the steady lake.”

WORDSWORTH.

THE scenery around water, though before indirectly included, now claims more particular mention. It is a sort of costume to the liquid, changeable, and more life-like spectacle, imparting adornment and receiving interest, and as it were life in return.

There are the grassy declivity and pebbly margin; the jutting rocks, or long smooth side of a cliff. There are the trees and shrubs leaning against or standing upon these varieties of shore, concealing and revealing them by turns, and contrasting their green umbrage with the shaded blue of the water. These gazed at from the opposite side of a considerable expanse, form a picture which leisure might travel quite a distance to see and be made oblivious of care.

How charming, viewed at a little distance, are some of the capes which thrust themselves into

the inland pond or some of our ocean bays and creeks. How softly the eye slips from the fresher green of the moister points, and meets the water that sleeps, or the wavelets that waken and glitter upon the margin. Then in another place is seen the white beach rounding in under the grassy or bushy shore, like a bright rim curiously inlaid between the azure water and the verdant land.

Circumjacent objects reflected in the crystal element below are an absolute enchantment. They seem an earthly embroidery to another firmament, which hollows its vast concave down, down to nethermost grandeur. A Parnassian ancient might have fancied it a cerulean theatre, where his water-nymphs could game in chariots of cloud around the golden goal of a sun.

CHAPTER XIII.

AN ILLUSION.

“Gentle Nature plays her part
With ever-varying wiles,
And transient feignings with plain truth.
So well she reconciles,
That those fond idlers most are pleased
Whom oftenest she beguiles.”

WORDSWORTH.

THERE is a spectacle with which one may always be amused in traveling, and in which childhood certainly might find curious sport to its frolicsome eye. As we have never seen it even mentioned, we will enliven our page by its description. It is the apparent motion of objects on the wayside as one passes rapidly along. Here is combined the gracefulness of motion with picturesque beauty. Indeed it seems as if inanimate nature were imbued with life, and acting the picturesque and beautiful as on a theatre.

Any mode of traveling creates the scene, but that by steam-car makes it the most perfect from the velocity. We cannot better illustrate than by describing the spectacle to be witnessed on the railroad between Boston and Salem. Suppose yourself seated at the window on the right hand side

and going Eastward. The grounds, fences, and trees nearest, seem to run past as if they had life like animals, or soul of fire and breath of vapor, as the train has, and are speeding to the city you have left. The hills and banks along the bay-shore appear to stand still, or to have a vacillating movement, as if doubtful which way to go, or whether they shall go or stay. But the objects at a still greater distance, the round, heaving islands, and the towering vessels in sail-swelled pomp, are proceeding with you, not apparently at the same rapid rate, but with a stately glide, such as might befit things of their magnitude. Now and then these distant travelers will be hidden from view by an intervening high ground, anon they slide gracefully out from behind, keeping opposite to your elbow, as if they had agreed to companionship and were bound to keep on.

On approaching Salem you shoot in among romantic cliffs, soft meadow-plats, gleaming watersheets, scatterings of shrubbery, and noble tree clumps; here you have wildness and beauty in grotesquest sport, as if they had caught the olden witchery, and were harmlessly playing it out for the amusement of passengers.

Returning to Boston, there is a somewhat ludicrous spectacle on the northern side. The dark cliffs back of Lynn add to their picturesque charm by taking up their march in long procession. It may be that a marsh is thickly peopled with haystacks; these set to dancing, as it were, round a

centre in a sort of elliptical orbit, apparently with as much regularity of time and interspaces as if they had been trained by a master and were governed by a lively music. The eye is quite mazed at such strange "poetry of motion," and the organ of mirthfulness catches a brief pastime from this jiggling of the hay-giants on the lawn of their homestead.

Further on, the Chelsea hills shoot by each other with beautiful effect from their elliptical shape and the peeping of houses between. It seems as if they were on rail-roads too ; yet with all this mighty travel making no noise.

At length the Charlestown church-steeple walks off as on a visit to the neighboring spires of the city. And the monarch of American monuments puts off his steady sobriety for the frolic, and not to be alone in his grandeur ; or as fancy might say, he leaves his hero-hallowed throne, and takes Bostonward to thank the patriotic ladies that he was not left a dumpy dwarf through lack of provision for growth.

CHAPTER XIV.

MOUNTAINS.

"I live not in myself, but I become
Portion of that around me; and to me
High mountains are a feeling."

BYRON.

WE owe an especial tribute to the Mountains, and with the poet's Alp-begotten thought we begin our homage. We sympathize entirely with his lofty enthusiasm. Of all earth's scenery they have been by us most sought, most loved. In their changefulness of aspect they were the playmates of our youthful fancy. For us they skirted themselves with the fantastic mist, and wore a wreath of it for a crown. For us they caught each crimson dawn, and told of its beauty. For us they lifted a foot-stool of grandeur for the throne of the setting sun. Then they purpled in the twilight, that our vision might have wider and more varied range for its evening pastime of hues.

With what grand command they crowned the climax of scenery that educed our taste and charmed our spirit at native home; the even meadow, the winding brook, the maple groves, the oval hills, the over-looking mountains. There they now stand,

far-seen friendly indicators of all that subjacent loveliness. Mighty talismans of memory ! when discerned from any lofty distance, how we live over again sunrises and sunsets, and many a blessed day between ; many rambles alone, and some in sweet companionship ; alternate labor and literature, dreamy musings and keen, inquisitive thought. How re-appear the long reaching prospects of confiding hope, and the glittering ascents of bold aspiration. How our heart lifts itself and thrills with this magic renewal of the past ! But anon it bends in serene, submissive gratitude to One who, from above these heights climbed by sight or sought by the soul, put forth a providential hand, and held back and bore forward, and carried to and fro in devious course, ever displaying the varied pictures of his pencil, and maturing the delicious, innocent taste which is here permitted an humble expression.

Pardon, benevolent Reader, the reference to dear landscapes, and a personal experience, without which these word-paintings might not have been. The name of our topic has been a magic ; let us now together feel the spell.

We would have the soul as early as possible stamped with the impressiveness of mountains. In the first place, their forms are a study. There is the variety of surface shaping their bases ; then therefrom their ascent, gradual and smooth with pasture or thickset wood, or more diverse in outline, with round protuberance of hill or huge projection of bluff.

Lastly, their summits: these stretch into long ridge, with more or less discernible prominences, like an enormous rampart, with bastions builded against the storms. They otherwise swell gently into curve, moulding the attractive beauty of an arch out of the horizon. Again, they heave boldly into peak, or shoot wildly into pinnacle, as it were, notching in and splitting open the sky.

When several of these abrupt heights happen quite closely together in cluster or range, a curious spectacle is presented by the sky to the distant observer, fancy assisting the view. A belt of the great firmament, bending majestically over from the zenith, finishes its descent earthward with inverted mountain-shapes, of cloudy grey or azure bright; these confronting the dark blue earth-giants in grandeur-making competition.

In traveling in the vicinity of a mountain, it is entertainingly noticeable how it will vary its appearance, as the beholder shifts his relative position. One can hardly believe, sometimes, that it is the same object, it is so unaccountably altered. It seems a sort of Protean pantomime, playing pranks of transformation.

Again, it is a matter of interest, how the hue of mountains changes, ever imparting novel interest, from the first peep of morning to the final shading-off at evening twilight.

How the thick cloudiness of some days will shed down upon them its sombreness. How will the dark overhanging thunder-cloud deepen their blue

to the very verge of blackness, impressing the solemn sublime, as cloud and mountain seem almost joined and blended together in one dark expanse. We say, let the lesson of the school-room be left, let domestic labor pause, where no necessity hurries, to place the mind under such enlivening, or soul-subduing aspects.

No scenery probably tends more to awaken and ennoble the sentiment of patriotism than mountains. Seas make their magnificence common to the separate lands they expand between. The all-encompassing ocean gives its sublimity of waters to a world. But mountains—solid earth's uttermost grandeur—are a nation's own. They are fastened upon a country's form like a vast member—the device and creation of God. They bear upon their sides and hold beneath their surfaces its cities and villages, yet to be built, together with implements and ornaments yet to be wrought. With perpetual industry they spin forth the

“Streams that tie her realms with silver bands.”

They are not only individualized, each by its own peculiar aspect, but consecrated by a particular name. They are clad with local associations, and mantled all over and beautified to the heart by a national interest. When a neighboring inhabitant journeys away, his last backward look, his first returning glance, are to them. They indicate his home. Ah! just down there beneath, are his best loves, and his bosom thrills again. The mariner or other traveler

across the ocean holds them in his last aching gaze as long as he can ; and thitherward his heart aims its last adieu. On his return, how he labors for the earliest glimpse at their summits. They seem as soaring heralds from home—angels of the great patriotic presence, coming to meet him, crying, “Hitherward—O, welcome!”

Mountains are the final citadel of national freedom, founded when the land was prepared above the seas, as if freedom should be esteemed as dear as life. Here is the last refuge of the patriot few. And if these should be captured, the heaven-built battlements still abide to await their return. War will not dig them down or dismantle them of their ridged walls and caverned embrasures. Here the Genius of Liberty dwells ever fast, still sounding her trumps of echo, and waving to and fro her signal banners of cloud. She never dies. The Eternal Spirit is her life. He keeps her high toward His All-mighty presence, that when the exiles shall return, or a nation shall break its chains, or arise regenerate from its vices, or when a youthful people shall nobly aspire, they may all know whither to turn for encouragement and blessing.

Such are the mountains to the patriotic, at least to the classically poetic mind. Go then, fellow countrymen, and gaze. Stand, with your children around you, and teach them to look up to these “everlasting hills” with a reverent love. If the blue ridges and peaks stretch and tower not within view of home, let an hour or hours be spent in

resorting to spots, where may be seen those piles and points that so impress with grandeur, and a grandeur, too, so romantically connected with the cherished idea of native land. Yea, go up into their very midst,—Fathers with your families, Teachers with your schools, and hold intimate communion. But let all voices be hushed, except to fitting language—that of meditative, ennobling thought. There study every aspect and catch its picture upon the memory ; gorge, glen, cavern, and crevice—veiled in shadow or hidden in deeper darkness ; shivered crag, rocky acclivity, or wooded brow, and far bold summit. Be still and hearken also—the sigh of trees, the dash of waters, the roar of winds, the resounding of echo—it is from the ancient orchestra of the solitudes, ever awaiting the sublime symphonies of the living heart !

Thus far the scenes, the sounds, the influences below. But rest not contented with these. One whom the mountain Muse and the genius of Freedom inspired in very childhood, thus admonishes, and would bear you up on the pinions of his verse,—

“Thou who wouldst see the lovely and the wild,
Mingled in harmony on Nature’s face,
Ascend our rocky mountains. Let thy foot
Fail not with weariness, for on their tops
The beauty and the majesty of earth,
Spread wide beneath, shall make thee to forget
The steep and toilsome way.”

We would have all our countrymen, if possible,

visit those groups of grandeur in the North, which are still more aggrandized by the names of illustrious statesmen. At least, let not any talk wishfully of the Alps, and yearn to catch the stormy spirit of Byron from their avalanches, tempests and peaks, till they have held this exalted communion at home.

Suppose a clear day in summer, and one is on such ennobling, exciting pilgrimage. His first vision of the mountains is at a far distance. How gracefully they run their smooth, blue pinnacles sharp into the light azure sky. On nearer approach, they enlarge round about, they lift themselves up into grandeur. Finally, stand beneath their mightiest presence, and to pious fancy they seem a manifold throne to which the All-mighty Maker bows the heavens and comes down to receive the awed scene-pilgrim's profoundest homage.

But let this spectacle and its emotions pass. First, now those mountain appurtenances, the two long, deep defiles, where the beautiful, the wild, the grotesque and the grand, in continuous and mingled arrangement break and alternate upon the eye, like the ever novel passages of a romance. One might fancy the well-wrought varying way, with the lofty cliff-sides and forest garniture, and the silver inlay of stream, to be the courtly avenue to the august Royalty of the mountains.

Now ascend. How the thousand objects below—rocks, trees, edifices, become belittled. Bold surfaces, even the very hills, flatten into sameness and are lost. You stand on Mount Washington! Lo!

the wide, wide country, deep below, and far, far around; settled towns, intervening woods, streams, and ponds, the wild stretch of forests, darkly green, and lakes just gleaming upon the horizon. Inferior but high mountains run away into distance, like a vast reach of billows that had been stopped and hardened into everlasting stability. Away on the western horizon, the Vermont heights range themselves, but their loftiest peaks in lowly deference. Hitherward, the Connecticut sends up its vapory garlands. Other summits do reverence in blue distinctness, or misty dimness. A peaked family of eminences stand close around as in courtly waiting. Overhanging all, is the great, domed heaven. Centred amid all,—the beholder. What his emotions? There comes up from below, there flows in from around, there descends from above, the grandeur of expanse, the sublimity of vastness.

It is at Mount Washington, the loftiest of our Atlantic country, and grand with its greatest name. Let the occasion be consecrated and holy. Now sing the songs of Freedom. Now quote the immortal poets; add to the mightiness of nature, the living mightiness of genius. Let Romance and Patriotism grow religious, and in still, small, and solemn tones, find expression through sacred hymn, or holiest Writ. Then the soul shall be high, and lifted up to the uttermost, till adoringly lost in that Most High, who was, before the mountains were brought forth, or the earth and the

worlds had been formed ; and who is, from everlasting to everlasting.

So do, and it is a life's one occasion of blessedness—Patriotism and Piety in a momentary perfection.

CHAPTER XV.

WATER-FALLS.

—— “ Now that I have communed with the vast—
Seen the veil rent from Nature's stormy shrine,
Heard her wild lessons of magnificence
In cataract voices, 'mid the echoing rocks,
I feel a *louder* call upon my soul——
A trumpet sound ;—and as a soldier girds
Himself for war, so will I gird my thoughts
For conquest o'er the world ! ”

MRS. CAROLINE GILMAN.

THERE are many admirable poetic tributes to the scenery now in view, but we have quoted this fragment because it is crowned with so admirable a moral. It may be compared to the rain-bow cloud of the cataract—a glorious spirit-like being born out of tumult and irresistibly going heavenward. Read the “ Poetry of Traveling,” and especially that intermingling of the beautiful and grand, the lines on Trenton Falls, and who would not visit such scenery, and also catch the mighty inspiration ?

But we must enter into prosaic detail. First, there are the wild rocks—some round, some jagged, some sharply pointed, jutting out, shooting up, with cracks and hollows, or deeper caverns beneath, and gravelly banks, or rude cliffs, and shrubs or trees

darkening the sky above ; then the waters, wilder still with their swiftness and tumult. First the calmer stream pours to the precipice, then the torrent tumbles this way and dashes that, with foam and spray, and perhaps rainbow, and finally rushes into the deep, still pool, as to a bed of rest to its tired energies. It may be that some long, high rock may form a cascade, exhibiting here a straightened crystal ribbon of fluid, and there the most delicate threads, and in certain positions of the sun, all glittering with the fascination of prismatic coloring.

Scenes somewhat like these may be found in the vicinity of every town, at least in many-hilled and many-watered New England. Let such scenes be sought out and become the resort of families and schools as a delicious pastime. With judicious teaching, what a spirit of patriotism, and of religion, might steal forth from the spectacle into the shrine of the young heart.

We would have every American, at least once in his life, visit Niagara. If from the East, let him take the minor falls in his way. There is the Trenton, the bold and beautiful, arrayed in the most fantastic costume of rock and wood. If this shall be the first considerable spectacle of the kind he has seen, can he but exclaim, with her already quoted—

“My God,
I thank thee for this wondrous birth of joy,
Unfelt, and unimagined till this hour!”

Then let him pause at the Genessee, until its one long cascade shall impress its sober magnificence. But let him stop and abide as long as he can at Niagara. He has been prepared to go up to the world's wonder, by successive grades of romantic and religious emotion. He now stands amazed before the power and majesty and glory of waters ; and his spirit bows down with intensest awe before Him who spake, and the cataract was, who wills, and it continues.

Here might Patriotism swell with its loftiest aspirations. Ye energies of enterprise ! tear down the hills, fill up the valleys, bore through the mountains, chequer the whole land with smooth steamways, until every son and daughter of our country shall be able once in life to behold Niagara ! be able to come where the northwestern seas do congregate, and with one stupendous voice of benediction bless the shore of freedom, and lift Nature's sublimest anthem to Freedom's God, before they depart our country's line and lose their nationality in earth's common deep.

We close our chapter with a portion of Mrs. Sigourney's sublime apostrophe to Niagara. It should be read by all who have not beheld and listened to this mighty minister of the All-mighty, to induce them to its presence. It should be perused as often as possible by those who have gazed and heard, that the awful lesson may not be forgotten, but even be more deeply impressed by handmaid genius. We may somewhat add by it to the chances of perusal.

"Flow on forever in thy glorious robe
 Of terror and of beauty. Yea, flow on,
 Unfathomed and resistless. God hath set
 His rainbow on thy forehead; and the cloud
 Mantled around thy feet. And he doth give
 Thy voice of thunder, power to speak of Him
 Eternally—bidding the lip of man
 Keep silence—and upon thy rocky altar pour
 Incense of awe-struck praise.

* * * * *

Thou dost make the soul
 A wondering witness of thy majesty,
 But as it presses with delirious joy
 To pierce thy vestibule, dost chain its step
 And tame its rapture, with the humbling view
 Of its own nothingness, bidding it stand
 In the dread presence of the Invisible,
 As if to answer to its God through thee."

CHAPTER XVI.

OCEAN.

"Great beauteous Being ! in whose breath and smile
My heart beats calmer, and my very mind
Inhales salubrious thoughts.
The Spirit of the Universe in thee .
Is visible ; thou hast in thee the life,
The eternal, graceful and majestic life
Of nature, and the natural human heart
Is therefore bound to thee with holy love."

CAMPBELL.

THE OCEAN ! What spectacles of the most various, of loveliest beauty, of picturesque interest, of deep, impressive grandeur, does it afford to him who will but pause from his play, or stop from his labor to look. Note on the shore, the milky beaches, the shooting capes, grey with ledge or green with herbage, the ragged rocks, the towering cliffs, the deep, fearful gorges, around which the eternal tides flap and dash and overwhelm. Then its waters of varying hues of green, as they lie close under the eye or recede therefrom, but of dark blue, as they stretch toward their shoreless infinitude, beneath the blue of the infinite sky. What changing aspects does the sea surface present beneath cloud or sunbeam, or as the mist hovers in

folds or lies in strips just above. Then the vessel, that

“Walks the water like a thing of life:”

what can be more fascinating to the vision than this, as it careers on its course in full view from the shore. How graceful its motion; how as with sudden magic its form and even color shift, as it tacks this way and that, and presents prow or stern or broadside to the eye. Then what a difference between the shaded and the sunny side of the sail. Let the object be a great ship of a clear afternoon, with all its canvas swelled to the utmost, rounding out like the rolls of a thunder-cloud, and all this reflecting the slanted but bright beams of the descending sun, and we cannot better express ourselves than to say that it is glorious, glorious!

We would have all the youth in our country, from the sides of the remotest mountains, for once, if possible, visit the seaside, to behold and wonder at the marvels of God around and upon the great deep. If they could not tarry to gaze on the tremendousness of a storm, they might at least treasure in remembrance the glory of a sunrise from the sea. For the sake of illustration, may we be permitted to present a scene beheld from the window of our chamber, at a friend's house on a high ground in Marshfield, the description being penned directly afterward on the spot.

The eastern sky was all purple and gold, and the smooth ocean beneath, all purple and gold from

reflection. There seemed a double aurora, for so perfect was the correspondence between the original and the reflected light, that we could scarcely define the line of the horizon that parted sky and water. They were fused together, as it were, into one changefully effulgent expanse. Just at the point in the horizon, to which the sun was approaching, there soon appeared a little centre from which radiant hues streamed not only upward but apparently downward, with a most magical effect. Shortly there was a glimpse of reddish gold. This elongated into size, then rounded, as it came up and up, till there seemed, as it were, an upheaving hill of flame, till half the luminary was above the water, when it gradually shaped itself into a glowing but clearly defined and mighty globe, as ready, apparently, to roll in its magnificent plenitude round the horizon, as to glide and shrink into the sky. To enhance the delight of the scene, the house seemed to be surrounded by birds, pouring out their first gush of mingling melodies, as it were in praise of the Founder of the seas and the Father of lights.

Were such a spectacle to be presented in nature but once in a hundred years, and the exact moment of it could be calculated, how would men and women and children throng from city and village and the far hills, in wonder to behold it!

But now, who thinks of traveling a mile, on purpose for the cheap yet intense and exalted pleasure of beholding the glories of sunrise at sea.

But, ye leisure summer visitors of the Atlantic coast, is it possible that you forego the spectacle, for the sake of late-sitting frivolity at night, and late-lying insensibility or indolence in the morning? Awake, up! The clarion of Genius calls, let the soul now listen to its exulting strains!

“With thee beneath my windows, pleasant Sea,
I long not to o’erlook earth’s fairest glades
And green savannahs. Earth has not a plain
So boundless or so beautiful as thine.

Nor on the stage
Of rural landscape are there lights and shades
Of more harmonious dance and play than thine.

There’s love

In all thy change, and constant sympathy
With yonder sky, thy mistress; from her brow
Thou tak’st thy moods, and wear’st her colors on
Thy faithful bosom.

And all thy balmier hours, fair Element,
Have such divine complexion, crisped smiles,
Luxuriant heavings, and sweet whisperings,
That little is the wonder Love’s own Queen
From thee of old was fabled to have sprung.”

CAMPBELL.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE SKIES OF DAY.

“The sky bent round,
The awful dome of a most mighty temple,
Built by omnipotent hands for nothing less
Than infinite worship.”—PERCIVAL.

How infinitely diversified and varied is the scenery of the common sky ; yet the million mostly regard it as the source of fair weather and foul.

First, the form. The curve, of all figures, is the most charming to the sight. In the sky we have this in the highest possible perfection ; the lines of utmost beauty woven into one all-surrounding curve. The centre is directly above every beholder. The zenith ever moves with him and pauses above him whenever he stops. From this point down to the whole circle of the horizon is dimension, the largest within the ability of sense. Then the color, when entirely clear, serenest azure, next to green, the vision's dearest love. We cannot briefly better describe the spectacle than to say, beautiful vastness. When the atmosphere is at the purest, there is an intense pleasure in a fixed gaze just at the one heavenly hue. It would seem as if intervening space were annihilated, and the azure

flowed into the very eye ; or rather, perhaps, as if the sense plunged in and were lost in cerulean luxury.

Next we have the occasional and flitting garniture of the sky. There are forms, and often hues in the flying or pausing cloud worth detaining the eye for a new emotion of beauty. But let us first trace these fabrics from their source, so beautiful are their beginnings. There is the vapor as it smokes up from the waters. Perhaps it lies heavily for a time, like a light grey wall over the distant stream. Sometimes it rises high into air at once, and quite compactly with a parted and flighty edge, or in broken masses, each with little strips above, as preceding pointers to the direction ; or it may be, in wreaths with a sort of spiral ascent attractively graceful in form and movement. How cunningly it creeps or fantastically curls up a mountain side ; then, it may be, infolding its crown and matting itself into a cap. In certain positions of the morning sun, its glances at the mist are reflected in the most delicate tinges, as of floating changeable gauze.

Clouds in the sky ;—a scenery infinitely diverse and ever diversifying anew. Let us contemplate and analyze. There is the separate lonely mass, its singleness giving interest. There is the scalloped circumference, the inner foldings, the middle plainness ; these shaded down from sunny brightness to the dusk of the smooth centre. It rests like the car of a reposing demigod on the serene

cerulean. It may be borne along gently by the breeze. Here the graphic and tasteful genius of Bryant shall lend description. He makes such an one the chariot of his Muse, taking his fancy on a world-tour.

“Beautiful cloud with folds so soft and fair,
Swimming in the pure and quiet air!
Thy fleeces bathed in sunlight, while below
Thy shadow o’er the vale moves slow;
Where midst their labor pause the reaper train
As cool it comes along the grain.”

Sometimes the sky is all crowded with clouds of this character, a multitudinous, multiform host. It is the noblest grandeur of cloudy numbers and diversities.

A more quiet spectacle is the vapor lying farther up and fastened against the sky in lengthy bars, over-lapping each other, or with seams of clear or shaded blue between. Or it may be, there is the appearance of innumerable little hassocks threading out from a thicker centre into the clear interspaces. It is enlivening, again, to observe light thin clouds, lower down, brushing frolicsomely by this stable ceiling, with their gauzy wings.

There is one scene for which the coming of summer always makes us glad; and if presenting it less frequently, we feel a privation. It is when the thunder chariots are rolling in their tardy majesty and draw together and interlock each other, as if in thick gathering at some magnificent tournament. See their dark bodies, grey borders, and

brassy rims. What grand involutions, like as wheel upon wheel. Or perhaps their edges point out like awning pinnacles under the sunbeams. But all these disappear as if drawn behind a thick dark curtain, to hide the display from mortal eyes. Through this the lightnings flash or dart along in momentary crinkles, terrifically beautiful. Harken also ! it is the thunder rolling deep and solemn in the distance, or bursting near with a sudden crash, with echo upon echo, reverberating around the arena of the storm. We have indulged in rather a classical and romantic view of the scene. It is better, however, to seek religious aspects. It is the Almighty who buildeth pavilions there, and inhabiteth them with his thunders, and beareth them along on the wings of his winds. He openeth their folds with his hand of lightning, and sweepeth it in swift benefaction, touching the air with healing, freshness and balm.

Why should not a whole school go forth from their uneasy benches and sultry confinement, and watch in still seriousness such a spectacle. In the emotions of beauty, grandeur and sublimity; called forth by the teacher's aid, the terrors usually felt would subside. It is on such occasions that religion should be made to take its mightier hold; and the heart be bowed down to its most solemn worship; and all this without an abasing shuddering fear of the Invisible Spirit of the scene. With love and filial trust, as well as with adoring awe, they might contemplate him who maketh the

clouds his chariôt, and thundereth marvelously with his voice.

Then, after a shower, there is the out-breaking sun, the glorious rainbow, the glittering water-drops on herb and tree, and the renewed and most glad-some minstrelsy of birds. But poetry from the earliest ages has been so lavishly rich in its descriptions of these, that any language of ours would be tame and altogether useless. There is one little piece of literature to which we cannot now but refer. It is the "Scene after a Summer Shower," by Andrews Norton. Although read by thousands a hundred times over in Pierpont's Class-book, it will bear perusal a life through, as often as Nature shall renew her original. It should be committed to memory by every child in the land. Thus, the splendor, the joy, the jubilant religiousness of the spectacle, when recurring, shall be more truly received, felt and reflected by his mirroring soul.

We have already portrayed the Morning in some faint manner. We did so because some of our readers, we fear, have not much acquaintance with the healthy, lovely, fascinating aspect. We wished to excite some curiosity, and if possible kindle a love. But the Evening—the evening sky, all see this, and who of the very least taste does not admire. A thousand writers have reveled too in the description. Their word-paintings of sunsets and twilights would make a volume of themselves. There is, however, one concomitant of the evening glories of which we would just give a hint. It is

their reflection from a still sheet of water. The scene is worth walking a mile for, at every leisure close of a day.

What a superb reality above, yet a more transcendant illusion beneath. The effulgent segments of two heavenly hemispheres, rim to rim, fastened by a narrow hoop of earth. The sun is going, and goes down; another sun, a luminary twin, face to face, feature to feature, comes round up to meet him in affectionate greeting. They gaze upon each other's radiant countenances, and retire together, as it were to hide their fraternal embrace behind the curtains of twilight. Now, how hue answers to hue, shade to shade, in all the varying, deepening changes. Of the two, the inverted water-scene is the most enchanting, from the novelty of position and the more delicate softness of the radiance. The almost spiritual light seems here spiritualized perfectly. The circles of splendor continue to glide down and to glide up, meeting together and narrowing as they pass away, till they are but glimpses, and are gone. Meanwhile two vast nights have been mutually approaching, marching round in thousand-gemmed majesty. Now they lay together, their star-girt brows in embracing repose.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE MOON.

“When, as the gairish day is done,
Heaven burns with the descended sun,
’Tis passing sweet to mark,
Amid that flash of crimson light,
The new moon’s modest bow grow bright
As earth and sky grow dark.”

BRYANT.

It is said somewhere in Walter Scott’s writings, if we remember rightly, that most youth advance not beyond sixteen without getting as far as “O thou,” in a sonnet to the moon. We have never even, till now, so far sought favor of the lovely planet. That she may not now deem us neglectful in our skyey lauditories, our sublunary friends will pardon us for devoting here a little plain prose in her honor.

The new moon is always a welcome sight. There has been a season of darkness. Perchance the clouds have hid the stars, making a stumbling night. How then like a smiling lip on a glowing face appears the delicate curve on the roseate twilight. Well may it be fancied that an oracle of the next month’s fortunes is uttered therefrom. How many glad voices answer back from the earth

—"There is the new moon—there is the new moon!" To change our figure, placed as it is on the rear of the day, it may be regarded as a little bow of sweet promise that every well-spent day shall be crowned by a conscious peace.

Then there is a later, rounder, and finally, the full-orbed queen of night. With what serene dignity she rises in a clear east, sweeping the stars with her silvery veil. She dazzles not the eyes away like the day-king, commanding man to useful industry; but his labor over, she invites his regards, and then smiles him away to repose.

With the costume of parting clouds, she magnifies her beauty to the majestic, and our soft admiration grows intense; we do romantic homage. Behold her now at loftier walk amid the stars. Fleecy clouds perhaps are trooping past, now shading her beams, then letting them through folds, or flinging them from silvered edges as they leave the unspecked, brightened azure. When the scuds are rapid on the breeze, how sportive the scene. It is as if the queen had put aside her majesty, and were at pastime with cloud and star. Our own spirits dance in harmony. We almost wish for wings or power of disembodied transition to soar up thither and mingle in the magic, joyous maze.

The autumnal full moon is the perfection of lunar majesty. It seems as if she was conscious of the golden lustre of the harvests, and the effulgence of leaf-hues; and conscious, too, that in the absence of solar favor, without her, their glory would be

looked for in vain ; all dead and shrouded in the pall of darkness ; the far star-gleams, able only to disclose how great the fading away had been.

The going down of the moon in the deep night horizon has a pleasing beauty. At the older phases there is an accompanying pensiveness, as being after midnight, the observer may be left in a darkened, sleeping solitude, indeed to feel alone.

We have thus done our first public devoir to the gentle luminary. To our readers there was no need, as hundreds before have held up a far better medium of admiration. We might have quoted from the poets, but we would individualize our offering, though it were through the faint sheen of our own language.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE STARS.

"The faded West looks deep, as if its blue
Were searchable, and even as I look,
The twilight hath stole over it, and made
Its liquid eye apparent, and above,
To the far-stretching zenith and around,
As if they waited on her like a queen,
Have stole out the innumerable stars,
To twinkle like intelligence in heaven.
Is it not beautiful?
Fit for the young affections to come out
And bathe in, like an element!"

WILLIS.

To the informed understanding the stars are greater, singly, than the earth's nearer satellite, however charming in her friendly lustre; together, they are the mightiness of hosts in the sublimity of magnitude and distance. But we must now view them simply as scenery, the vision's "poetry of heaven." Of all that the sky presents, there is perhaps no one object so bewitchingly beautiful as the evening star at its largest phasis. It would seem that the light of the retiring sun, now departed into manifold splendors and hues, had passed into golden unity again, and were inurned in that star, and thence streamed down in liquid, yet softest

glory. No wonder it has been named from the goddess of love ; for if the seraphic effulgence does not directly excite, it certainly predisposes to the tender emotion in more melting temperaments. The greater leisure, and the play of more delicate sensibilities at the close of the day, and the twilight's train of charms, all conspire, probably, to open the heart more widely to this flow of magic. No wonder the poets of all time have raved of the "Star of Eve." They have found full response, at least from the earlier and more romantic heart. Our youthful readers will not be displeased, we trust, at whatever portion of the "dewy radiance" we may have caught on our prosaic page.

We now turn to the general heavens. There is a singular aspect of them worthy of the lifted eye, which we will first describe. It is when they are all dotted over with small cloud-fleeces, and equally marked with azure openings ; through these appear the stars—perhaps a single star to a spot. How the eye runs bewildered over the alternating variety of the vault ; reposing here and there on the pillows of cloud, and leaning over to the star-beams from those cerulean founts. At length some single luminary fixes the gaze. It is of larger dimension, or some deeper emotion is called up in the soul by its peculiar radiance. It might almost be fancied that the spirit of some departed friend had taken abode in the fair orb, and were distilling from its cherished affections, sweet, pure influences into our answering hearts. Indeed, all the stars have a sort

of spiritual aspect to him who has a refined fancy, and aspires after the beautiful in its least sensual forms. When the day toil is over, its bustle done, and tranquillity falls as it were from the great calm heaven on all abroad, how the soul is charmed away to the stars, as to abodes where labor does not weary, and the weary of this world may at length find rest. At least, we are prepared by such contemplation to turn away and shut the outward sense to sleep, with the inward consciousness that there is spread abroad, within this resplendent garniture of stars, another universe of purer and more enrapturing loveliness and glory, to the revelations of which we shall at length be received.

A clear winter night is the season to feel the great "poetry of heaven" to the utmost. The air is in its best elemental purity. Let the earth be mantled with the unstained snow. The prismatic atoms of the surface reflect the star-beams, and spread a darkling magnificence, as a carpet fit for the tread of upright man, with his face toward heaven, and more than ever realizing the honor and glory with which he has been divinely crowned. Now lift the eye—lo, a vast canopy of blazing gems. Stand and gaze straight upward—it holds its central height directly over head; walk—the cerulean apex proceeds with you as if borne by invisible servitors above the apparent lord of the scene; one spacious white brilliancy of footstool, one vast environage of stars—all owned by him who solitarily stands amidst. For him the

“beautiful vastness” is in jewels—a royal diadem, or rather a courtly roof of woven diadems, lifted high and spread abroad, that kingly man might keep the glory of the emblem over his head, yet be free from the weight of its richness.

Thus far we have regarded the heavens as a scenic expanse ; but the picture retains the eye and fills the fancy, an illusive moment only. Religion and philosophy speak, and the spell is done. The crowns are broken, the dome vanishes, the gems grow to suns, and the beholder is at present but a poor vital atom amid the glorious infinitude of another’s realm ; he is told that his duty is perfect obedience to this sovereignty ; his honor, that he is an immortal and ever-growing intelligence ; his glory, that he is the offspring of God, who has prepared a crown for him surpassing the stars, and laid up, to be put on by the pure in higher, holier heavens.

CHAPTER XX.

WINTER.

"Come see the North wind's masonry—
The frolic architecture of the snow."

R. W. EMERSON.

WINTER also has its scenery, and that of a more peculiar and striking interest, inasmuch as the infinitely profuse and varied spectacles of the open portions of the year are almost entirely withdrawn.

What delicate adornments, what magnificent shows, what exhibitions of the grand has winter. Take the last of November or the beginning of December, when the eye has begun to be quite tired and sick of the all-spreading brown and barrenness, and who does not remember and feel the scene we will briefly describe.

The clouds gather and thicken, and darken at length into one unvaried hue all over the sky, lowering down, capping the mountains, and almost touching the hills. There is no wind, the air is heavy and stilled into perfect deadness. There are guesses that it will rain. But no. The cloud at the distant horizon is shedding its contents, and there of a hue novelly light. The heights are hid-

den, as by a loose curtain of mist. At length they drop from right above the head. It is the first snow upon the prepared and waiting ground. Its damp feathery dabs come down quite perpendicularly in the motionless air. You can almost count a hundred of them before they stop, they are so bulky and slow. Look up, and how curiously the white, but slightly shadowed millions appear. Look down, and how they pat, pat, countlessly and all without sound, except it be the gentlest whisper of greeting to the welcoming earth.

For a few moments, how singularly beautiful the spectacle of the bright crystallised flakes, sprinkled all over the dusky ground, roofs and fences. Soon, a universal white prevails, and finally it is noticeable and interesting, with what distinctness the foot-shapes of the household, the cattle, and even the domestic fowls, are imprinted on the thin snow, as on the smooth plate of an engraver. Such occasionally is the first picture in the exhibitions of winter. Is it not worth asking out-door boyhood to pause before, and leading more sedentary girlhood to the window, to look at?

But let me present picture second. We will suppose it the ensuing day. Fair weather has come—a clear blue sky, a beaming sun, and a still atmosphere. Now, how delightful the contrast with the melancholy dun of yesterday morning. The pure white carpet, spreading all round to the whole circle of the horizon to meet the pure azure canopy. Let the eye be so placed as to rove across

a plain, then over hill above hill, and finally up to lofty mountains piercing heaven's bluest depths with their whitest pinnacles, and you have an expansive magnificence, and a towering grandeur, such as the stern simplicity of winter alone can present.

The break of day over such a scene is worth taking a journey for. The mountain height faintly reddens in the glimpse of the morning, then glows more distinctly, then glitters with the richest radiance. The delicate rose color seems to run from this point as from a centre, down the mountain, and over the hill-sides, and thence to the plains, till the whole face of the snow is in blush, as delicate and lovely as the cheek of young and healthy innocence.

Again, there is a grandeur in the fierce snow storm, which it is better to feel and enjoy, than to cower over a fire, thinking nothing about it but safety from its violence. How the element drives through the air, whirls round the edifice, whips against its sides, obscuring with its flaky mists, the objects near, and altogether hiding those at a distance. It is romance, it is rapture to let one's own spirits loose also, to mingle with the wild career, and become, as it were, a very portion of the harmless tempest.

Then comes the clear cold next day. The furious wind whistles from the north-west over the loaded earth. How the loose snow scuds before

the blast, down the hill, through the valley or across the plain, and up the hills again, then wheeling into the enormous drift, or capering over its ridgy summit, all as if the snow streaks were alive and mad with frolic, like a thousand white haired coursers, loosened from the rein. Were such a scene of elemental sport to be seen but once in a lifetime, what family would not rush to the doors, what school would not leave study and play to enjoy. But now in its very commonness, not one in a thousand particularly minds it. Yet here, what power, what swiftness, and withal what grace!

Would that all the rustics of our country, shut up by snow drifts, or shivering along highways and wood-paths, could be aware of these solacing charms which come with the winter's cold.

The magnificence of ice-clad trees is arresting to the dullest eye, and withal has been so often portrayed by writers, and so entirely above our equalling, that our poor pen need not describe; and indeed it would be dazzled away should it make the attempt.

One scene more—the wintry-vernal, if we may so call it. We have the longer, warmer days of the earliest spring. Now the melting of snows, the trickling of the drops, the gathering of the streams, the gush and rush of many waters—there is a wild life about this, which bewitches the spirit into it, somewhat as the snow storm did from whose brooding repose this water-tempest is born. Bryant

has thus stirringly sent it through the channels of his verse:—

“Then sing aloud the gushing rills,
And the full springs, from frost set free,
That, brightly leaping down the hills,
Are just set out to meet the sea.”

CHAPTER XXI.

CONCLUSION.

“His spirit drank
The spectacle ; sensation, soul, and form,
All melted into him ; they swallowed up
His animal being ; in them did he live,
And by them did he live ; they were his life.”

WORDSWORTH.

THESE lines express the enjoyment to be found in nature by thousands and tens of thousands who are now without it, simply from want of cultivation. We have but poorly executed our work, but we trust that it may be of some use in leading to self-culture, and inciting parents and school teachers to inspire a taste for scenery in the young. Why shall the sketches of painters be so much sought, and the originals of the Infinite Artist so much neglected? It should not be so ; we feel that it should not be so. Walk into a city gallery of a pleasant day, and you hear a few envied people of leisure criticising and admiring the tints, lights and shades of the mimic landscape, when the surpassing, perfected picturings of God lie in exhaustless profusion every where, to be discriminated and admired by millions, without price, and even without slackening the hand of gainful toil ; but

alas! now they are as a blank, excepting to a comparative few.

O, what pastimes of body and spirit teachers and schools will have, in the air, in the beauty, the glory of nature abroad; yea what ecstasy, when they shall duly estimate the difference between man's mean school-house of timber and masonry, and this, not made by hands, the unwall'd, ever-aided, and healthy school-room of creation.

Finally, thus let our country's men and women be trained from childhood up, and how would early, rural home, be all surrounded by pictures, dear to taste, to imagination, to heart, and to memory; pictures to which those once resident there might turn with vernal thrillings, from the coldest, darkest wintriness of prolonged life. Country, moreover, would be sprinkled with innumerable spots to which the heart of patriotism would fasten; yea, into which it would grow, if we may so speak, as into a warm, living bosom. How could such fail to glow with most effectual aspirations to improve, and bless, and glorify the land of nativity, and the heritage of freedom.

And lastly, but most especially, let the idea of the holy, parental Creator be ever connected as the all-pervading and upholding spirit, and how would religion be radiant from each tint of loveliness; how would it envelop the forms of beauty, and the masses of grandeur, and overlay the mysterious expanses of the sublime! How would Religion, going forth from this inner temple of the soul, fill

with its holy, enhancing presence, the great outward temple of God, from the verdure and flowers around the altar of prayer, to the azure and stars of the dome.

THE

DIVINE AGENCY IN NATURE.



THE DIVINE AGENCY IN NATURE.

THE unceasing agency of the Creator throughout his material works is one of the most prominent doctrines of the Bible. It is early impressed on most readers of the sacred volume, in consequence of its sublimely striking representations of the infinite presence, power, and majesty of the Most High. The prayers and hymns of the sanctuary abound in phraseology of similar import. The hearts of worshipers respond to the language that leads their devotions. But we would ask if this impression of the Divine presence and agency is not, with very many, a vague sentiment rather than a clearly apprehended truth, a profound conviction of the understanding. We infer this to be the fact from the language we often hear respecting nature and its operations. *The Laws of Nature* is a phrase that falls from almost every tongue. Teachers of philosophy, especially, are in the habit of representing the Creator as having ordained certain permanent laws in the beginning, by which all the

revolutions of the worlds, and all the processes and appearances of matter, take place. They seemingly speak of creation as a mighty machinery, which, once set in motion, continues to go on without any further impulse from the original contriver and mover. The text-books of youth on Natural Science, and a thousand books beside, are fraught with language conveying such an impression. The term, "Laws of Nature," has been personified, indued with a life and a will. Indeed it has almost grown from a mere figure of speech to be an actual person, a very entity, even the Creator's conscious vicegerent, carrying on his works, while he might be away or inactive, almost as if the Omnipresent might be absent, the Omnipotent weary or delighting in rest.

We propose in the following article to show, that the Deity operates directly upon and through the material universe, without the intervention of what philosophers call Laws,—that all the changes of nature proceed from the instantaneous impulses of His almighty will. The subject is one of exceeding importance. It is of the highest practical tendency in respect to faith, filial love, and resignation toward the paternal Creator. And still further, it has a particular bearing on the probability and truth of the Miracles connected with our Religion.

In the first place, we must dispose of the often uttered and blindly used term, "Laws of Nature." Whence came it, and what does it mean? The word *law*, was primarily applied to human conduct.

It was prescribed to men by those in authority to do, or forbear to do, certain things. The language used on the occasion, was denominated a law. The definition of the term is, a rule of action. All know that it is not the rule of action which causes action. The origin of conduct, properly speaking, is the living energies seated in the constitution of man. The law indeed may furnish a motive to conduct, but it is that centre of the inner man, the will, which is the source of movement. From this primary use of the term, it was transferred, with a figurative application, to the works and operations of nature. One of the distinguishing characteristics of matter is regularity of appearance and of motion. Under given circumstances its elements always combine in a certain proportion, its particles or masses tend in a certain direction, for the accomplishment of some important end; just as if it possessed consciousness, and was obeying a mandate imposed by some superior power, to whom it felt constrained to submit. Hence matter was said to obey certain laws, or acted according to a rule, as man does; but it is evident, that it is not the rule that causes the action in the one case any more than in the other. For instance, an apple drops from its tree by a law of nature; all that is really meant is this, that matter of a due density, and undisturbed by any external force, uniformly tends toward the centre of the sphere to which it belongs, as if following a known rule previously prescribed. The term *gravitation*, is often used as if it were a

real property of matter, or an individual agent operating upon it. But gravitation is nothing but a word,—a word expressive of the fact that matter tends toward matter with a force proportionate to distance. This word does not explain the cause of the tendency or the ratio of force. To say that gravitation makes the apple fall, or bodies tend toward each other, is, strictly speaking, the same as saying that a fall makes a fall and a tendency makes a tendency. Take another instance. By a law of nature water freezes at a specific temperature. All that the phrase really conveys is, that, on condition that a certain portion of caloric leaves the fluid, it becomes solid. The cause of the departure of caloric or of the consequent change, is not in the least explained by the terms by which the phenomenon is expressed.

Let us suppose ourselves to have been born deaf and dumb, and moreover never to have been taught the use of language by sight. We will also suppose ourselves to possess acute perceptions, a proneness to reflection, and an ardent curiosity. We are placed in the midst of nature, with all the elements of a philosophic mind, by which we may observe, compare, and infer, with not a single word of language either to aid or to mislead us. We perceive the apple drop. We may, perhaps, like Newton, of ourselves infer, or it may be signified to us by others, that it is brought down by a power similar to that which makes our feet cleave to the ground, the house press on its foundations, and which also

keeps the earth from flying off from the sun. Now all that we shall perceive will be the event, together with its invariableness, the circumstances being the same, accompanied also with the reflection that it is of the same nature with certain other phenomena. The term *law* being unknown to us, we cannot impute the phenomenon to this fancied agency. The idea usually conveyed by this term could not possibly enter our minds, and we should be likely to refer directly to the Creator as the direct and constant cause of what we observed.

What then are the Laws of Nature,—those invisible agencies of the philosophers, which have seemed to turn the wheels and tend upon the springs and valves of the universal machine? They are nothing but empty names, which were originally adopted by a figure of speech for the sake of convenience. They are mere words, which simply express the fact, that what we observed of things yesterday, we also observe to-day and are likely to observe to-morrow. Or, slightly to vary the definition, they are methods, or rules; according to which the things of nature are done; and it is of course absurd to say, that it is methods or rules which do them.

How has an occasional sound from perishing lips prevented the divine and ever-speaking voice! How has a little language on paper been as a curtain of darkness, hiding the all-surrounding and intimately present God!

But there are those who will readily grant the illusiveness of the afore-named phraseology, who

nevertheless entertain a notion fully as unphilosophical and untrue as that. They will not allow the immediate and ceaseless agency of the Deity for which we contend. They say that in the beginning the Creator *willed* his works to start into action, and phenomena to be connected in an invariable order. This action has continued, this connection has remained unbroken ever since, in consequence of this single original act of the Omnipotent will. Thus the worlds revolve and attract each other, and all the other operations and processes of matter take place. Let us see whether this opinion will bear the test of logical deduction. In the first place let it be remarked, that our ideas of God are derived from the analogies of man. All will acknowledge this, we presume. Effects or changes in things are produced by man, by what he calls his power. The effects and changes in nature are imputed to God, hence we ascribe to him the attribute of power. By a similar process we ascribe to him wisdom and goodness,—extending all these attributes to infinity. So, when we speak of the will of the Deity, we liken him to ourselves. We indue him with a human faculty.

Now, what do we mean by will, or the act of willing? When we will any thing to be done, there is a desire of the mind, and an impulse from the mind. The desire, without an impulse, is not an act of the will. We will to walk, and there is an impulse upon our physical powers. We will to investigate some particular subject, and there is an

application of the faculties in that direction. If any, however, are inclined to dispute our definition of will, or our description of its operations, they must at least acknowledge, that nothing is ever done by human beings without an impulse from the centre and source of power in the mind. Now when the Deity willed the masses and the particles of matter to assume certain forms and properties, and to move in certain directions, there must have proceeded an impulse from the power inherent in his nature.

Many seem to have very vague ideas on this point. They take the figurative Scripture as literally expressive of the truth. God created by his word; he spake, and it was done. They have in view something like what would take place should we say to the chair, Come, or to the door, Open, and they should immediately put themselves in motion, without any exercise of our own proper strength to produce such an effect. So the Deity is supposed to have spoken or desired, without any impulsive power to bring to pass. But let it be repeated, that this is straying wide from the analogies on which all our conceptions of the Divine Being, are based. It is assuming for a fact, what has not the slightest shadow of evidence. All who make the least pretensions to rationality, therefore, must allow a divine impulse in the beginning to put the universe in operation. But we would proceed to inquire if a continued impulse is not necessary to continue the universe in operation. There is cer-

tainly no continued action from the will of human beings without a continued impulse of a living agent. If it be said that we put a machine in motion, and it continues to move without any farther exercise of our own proper strength ; we reply, that this is not a parallel case. The machine is made to operate by an active power inherent in matter,—gravitation, for instance, and this we affirm to be an impulse from a living agent,—even the Creator, which is the very point we are attempting to prove. The rule of analogy, therefore, and all the evidence that can be brought to bear on the subject, go to prove, that as impulse from the Divine mind was necessary in the beginning, so impulse from the same has been necessary ever since. Planets roll, suns diffuse their light, matter gravitates, vegetation springs, and all motion takes place, from that of the mightiest orb, to that of the minutest atom, in consequence of the direct and immediate agency of the infinite Creator.

It is difficult for us to realize that the phenomena of nature proceed from the immediate spirit, will, and power of God, because he is invisible. What cannot be seen by the physical eye, requires some exercise of faith to believe. We can realize the actions of men, because we imagine ourselves to behold the actors. But the difference between the infinite agent and finite ones, as it regards being seen, is not so great as it would at first appear. When we observe the human body and limbs, form and features, we do not behold the living agents them-

selves. It is the instruments of organized and animated earth they use, and not themselves, that meet our eyes. Let the soul suddenly leave an individual, the form and lineaments for a while may be unchanged, and to ordinary observation the same as when breathing with life ; but our fellow-being has gone forever ; and that which we called his person, and which for the first moment seemed unaltered, is now a corpse, a portion of the common dust. The only known agent is mind ; and what mortal man has ever set his eyes upon the mind of man ? It is most philosophically and certainly true, that the active beings who enliven the land with business, the active beings who have crowded the great world with its eventful history, were never by earthly vision seen. It is the spirit-moved matter which alone is perceptible, and not the spirit itself. Human agents are therefore as invisible as the Divinity. They are both indicated to be present, by the actions proceeding from their impulses. If the moving of the human limbs convince us that there is an unseen soul present and controlling them, so all the mighty movements and regular changes of creation should likewise convince us, that they as directly proceed from the energies of creation's unseen God. It is education and habit, that make us slow to believe. Could we forget the use of language, so that the convenient term, *laws of nature*, would vanish out of mind ; could we moreover forget that we had been accustomed from earliest infancy to the ordinary revolu-

tions and processes of matter; or could we be placed at once, with adult faculties, in the midst of this visible scene of things, we should most undoubtedly realize that there is a mighty, invisible Power moving, sustaining, and controlling all that should meet our wandering eyes.

With this view, the sublime scriptural descriptions of the omnipresence and omnipotence of the Deity are not mere metaphor; they are but the earliest and poetic garb of philosophic and eternal truth. The clouds *are* his chariot,—they are rolled by the propulsion of the viewless energies they infold. And doth he not fly on the wings of the wind? Its swiftness and its strength are the effluence of his power. His pavilion round about him is dark waters. The ocean that inwraps the earth, the floods that expand in the sky, are the dwelling of his might. With Him is terrible majesty. The Lord thundereth in the heavens; and the Highest giveth his voice. He shooteth out the arrows of his lightning, and flaming fires are his ministry. He toucheth the hills, and they smoke. At his presence the mountains flow down, yea, are overturned by their roots; and the earth trembleth and is dissolved. The heavens declare his glory. He covereth himself with light as with a garment. The infinitude of stars is the robe of his omnipresence.

We would now advert to some important uses of the doctrine we have endeavored to establish. It gives us a very distinct and satisfactory view of the

manner in which the Creator continues to exercise a providence over his creatures. If the material creation were carried on by the agency of laws, or in consequence of one original act of the Infinite will, there would certainly be no such thing as an *immediate* superintending Providence over our lives, as we are assured there is by Revelation. For what would the Deity be but an idle being, or at least mostly so, in respect to the earth and all other worlds, and the creatures of flesh and sense therein passing through their first stage of existence? Universal nature would indeed be but a machine. The hand omnipotent that formed it is withdrawn forever, excepting that it returns on great occasions with a miraculous touch, to remind us of its existence. "Our Father in Heaven," is but an unmeaning sound.

In what respects is a paternal providence manifested, according to Christian belief? Is it not in the appointment of the unforeseen vicissitudes of life,—the lot of health or sickness, prosperity or adversity? But these do most intimately depend on those changes in material things which take place according to an established mode of operation, or in obedience to those laws which are said to pervade and control the works of God. For instance, when we are brought to the brink of the grave by disease, do we not feel that our lives immediately depend on the will of the Giver? And when we recover, do we not acknowledge the hand of the Most Merciful? We say that "the Lord

chasteneth whom he loveth." "Affliction cometh not forth of the dust." Yet we know that the disorder by which we sink, and the causes by which we rise, are as natural, as that the inanimate foliage should wither in the frost and put forth again in spring. If we are rich, and the flames consume or the tempest sweeps away our well-earned wealth, if of Christian heart, we believe that the all-wise Disposer designs that we should lose and be poor. With the Psalmist we might exclaim, "Fire and hail, snow and vapor, and stormy wind fulfil his word!" Nevertheless, in all these things there is nothing apparent but inanimate matter proceeding according to fixed methods of operation. Indeed, nothing ever happens to us through the physical world and our bodily constitution, which does not take place according to these methods, or in obedience to what are called natural laws. Where, then, is the immediate providence over our lives,—a Father's unceasing care over his beloved children, unless these material instruments directly affecting us are within the immediate grasp and subject to the actual moving of the parental hand? Our argument proves, we think, that this is the truth. The volumes of Revelation and Nature agree. The light of the Divine countenance is lifted upon us in philosophy as well as in the figurative Word. Well may it be said, that not a sparrow is forgotten before God, or falleth to the ground without our Father. It is true that he numbereth and keepeth the very hairs of our heads.

He is indeed the breathing of our life, the health of our countenance,—the giver of every good and perfect gift. In all that makes us happy, we cannot but realize a Father's immediate bounty, as much as if the blessing dropped from an opening hand in the skies. From the mightiest to the minutest of physical objects and operations, there is a *present* consciousness and care. Not only the flying orbs of immensity, which vary not a hair from the path, or a moment from the year appointed, but every particle that converges toward its respective centre is an argument for a providence,—a providence over all that breathe, from upright man with face toward heaven, to the organized atoms that mingle life with the very elements. This is indeed to be the Friend, the Father, the All-in-all of an enjoying creation. It is a different character from one, who created at first, and then left a machinery of laws coldly rolling and vibrating throughout his material works. With this view, it is not merely the heart uplifted to the sublime of devotion, but the understanding assenting to eternal truth, when we exclaim with the Apostle, "In Him we live, and move, and have our being; for of Him and through Him and to Him are all things."

We may now be permitted to make a practical appeal respecting our doctrine. It regards its use in the education of the young. We have intimated before, that the text-books of students abound in the deceptive term, "Laws of Nature." The same

phrase is ever on the lip of instruction. And how many teachers explain the phenomena of nature, and perform "beautiful experiments" on the affinities of matter, with scarcely an allusion to the Divine Author and Mover of all. Like the idols of the heathen, which at length diverted the worshiper from the divinities they represented, so also, only worse, both the teacher and the taught, have been withheld from the Only and True Power in nature by a convenient representative,—more unreal than the idolater's image,—by an unsubstantial word. Science seems to be pursued from mere curiosity, or to lift the learner to the reputable eminence of knowing, or to furnish the coarse utilities of work-day life and gain-getting hands. Some, perhaps, may have a vague notion of disciplining the faculties, but how very few aspire to exalt and sanctify the soul by the aid of science. The beauty, grandeur, and gloriousness of creation are presented as a mere pastime to the vision, or a luxury to the taste of an epicurized intellect. How seldom recognized is the Spirit that expresses itself through these lines and lineaments. This should not be so. It would not be so, did all who instruct possess the true unction of their calling. No wonder that so many of our young men know not the truth and the delightfulness of piety. The necessary appliances are not made by the hands set apart to the work. Let the teacher of science feel, that he is not merely the expounder of mechanical and vital nature, but that he is also the teacher of Nat-

ural Religion, the interpreter of God. As much depends on him, as on the pulpit or the theological chair. The teacher of science presents objects and phenomena to the senses; and, while sense and intellect are fastened on these unquestioned verities, he may take the heart by surprise, and burst forth in a strain which shall forever associate the Creator with his works in the minds of his pupils.

We would moreover urge our views on the teacher in the Sunday school. Let not the more dependent minds here be distracted from the truth by a blinding and unexplained phraseology. With the opening spring, many schools, interrupted by the inconveniences of winter, are again renewed. It is the favorite season of childhood, as if it found a living sympathy in the emblem of its own tender period. Of all the year, this is the most propitious time for making it feel the realities of the Divine presence and agency. The faithful teacher cannot but seize on the opportunity to impress his pupils with the perfections of the Creator. The little enjoyers need hardly be prompted to inquire what has produced the delightful change. Let them be taught aright. Discourse, if you please, of what is called cause and effect, of the revolving earth, the increasing warmth, and nourishing moisture, but speak not of these operations and elements as if they were nothing but a machine. Say not merely, "Our Father *made* them all,"—putting the space of centuries between the filial soul and the paternal presence,—but rather say, he is *making*, is repeat-

ing what he has done for his children from creation until now. Let every object and every change in nature betoken the indwelling and ever-working and all-loving Spirit ; and the rain shall not drop, and the dew distil on the tender herbage, with a more vital and beautifying influence, than that of your instruction upon the tender and forth-putting heart ; and God shall bless the "springing thereof." Thus shall Religion have its sweet and holy prime.

We intimated that the doctrine we have endeavored to establish, had an important bearing on the miracles connected with our religion. We will now devote a brief space to this point. The Deist also is beguiled by this delusive phrase, "Laws of Nature." With him a figure of speech has become an agent ; or, rather, creation is a machine put in motion by the Infinite Artist, and decreed to go on for ever without further interference. We hope to have proved to his candid mind, that the Laws of Nature, if any thing, are the immediate and ceaseless energies of nature's indwelling and ever-living Soul ; that the boundless material machine is intimately and essentially connected with its Creator, and is acted upon every moment, in every mass and particle, by the all-diffusive power of the universal God. We believe that this agency is exercised in that chosen and particular manner, which will on the whole promote the highest possible good of his creatures. Now if his omniscient wisdom perceives that this highest possible good can best be effected

by occasional deviations from his ordinary course, being essentially present to all matter, he can as well deviate from his general mode as proceed in it. Miracles are no disordering of a machinery impelled by its Maker to changeless rounds and vibrations. Miracles are integral portions of one infinite plan, the unbroken continuity of everlasting action. He who is directly pouring Jordan to its sea, is as able to stop it in its flow as to bear it onward. He could as well hush the winds and sink the billows to stillness at the prayer of the Saviour, as stir the elements to a tempest. The resurrection of Jesus was not more difficult to his power than stopping the currents of vitality at death. He could as well raise to life, in the twinkling of an eye, all that have breathed and died since Adam, as have returned them to the dust, one by one, through the long space of centuries.

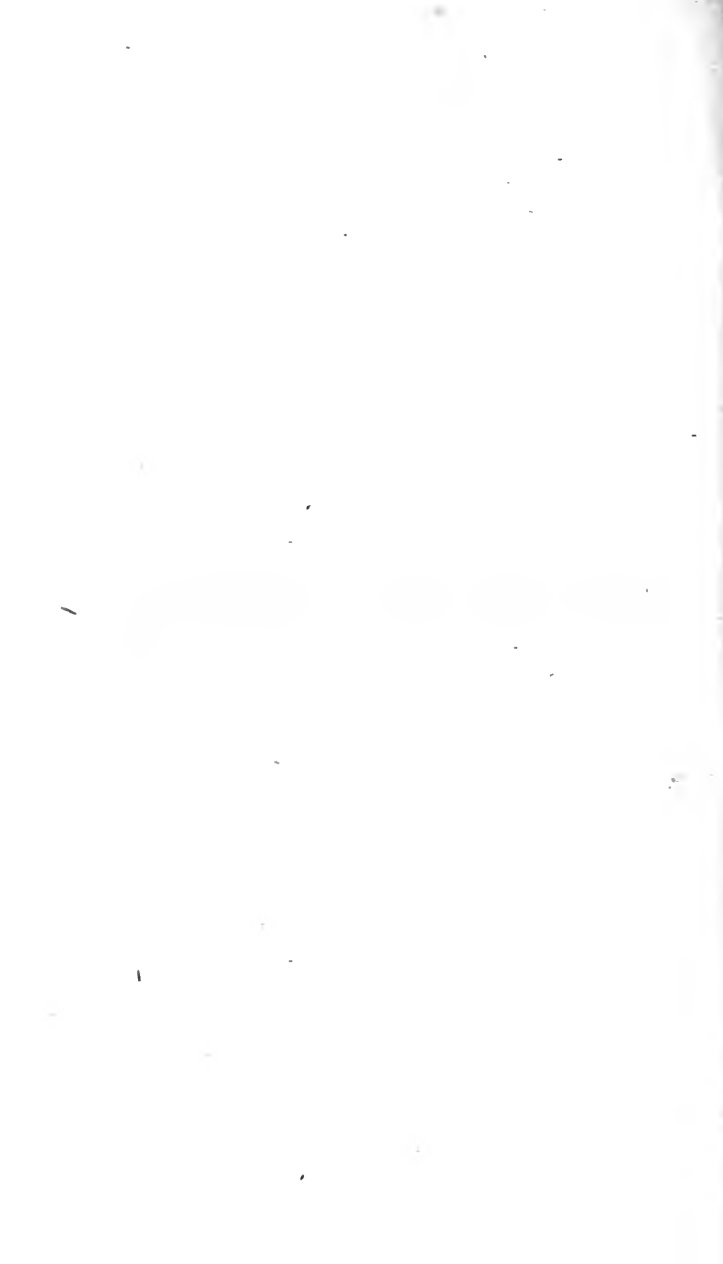
Let the preceding view of the Creator be impressed on the Deistic unbeliever, and we cannot but think that he will have taken a considerable step toward a thorough conviction of the divine origin and miraculous circumstances of Christianity. It is highly important, therefore, that this view should be clearly apprehended by all believers, and especially by all the teachers and defenders of our faith.

In view of the growing infidelity of the day, we regret that the error we have endeavored to expose is so prevalent among sincere believers. They believe in the reality and sufficiency of laws, or at least in one original impulse from the Divine Will

adequate to all subsequent order and action. But, this being the truth, what are the declarations concerning an immediate paternal Providence, which throng the Sacred Volume? what are they but illusive clouds of metaphor, instead of clear illuminations from the Father of lights? We apprehend that many of liberal education, and especially those particularly interested in natural science, entertain the same, not only unscriptural, but *unphilosophical* opinion.

Ask these men of liberal acquirements, What is the present employment of the Creator, if his works are continued in action by the supposed deputed efficiency? and they reply, that he is active in some new geological or animal formation in some unfinished planet. Or he is creating from its dust, and induing with his image, the lords of some completed world, to replenish and subdue it. And perhaps he is performing miraculous wonders to reclaim and educate the sinful race of some other sphere. Seemingly as if the Almighty and Omnipresent portioned out his energies upon spots; or as if, excepting these few and scattered localities of action, he rested in slumberous complacency, in the midst of his perfected works.

THE DEVOUT AFRICAN.



THE DEVOUT AFRICAN.

MANY of the colored population of Boston were once slaves at the South. Their lives have been fraught with labors, pains, hopes, fears, agonies, perilous adventure, and perhaps of loftiest heroism, such as the hue-scorning White would wonder at and think gloriously romantic in anybody's life and character but those of the Negro. Among them, too, are the proud world's "little ones," who are high Heaven's greatest; the despising of whom, I verily believe, will be found a fearful thing in the judgments of eternity. Let facts illustrate.

In the summer of 1845, my duties in the Ministry-at-large led me through the African obscurities of West Boston. In one little yard, in different abodes, I found three individuals who had once been in Southern servitude, and who were entire strangers to each other till they came together in this city from their separate thraldoms. One was a middle-aged woman, who told me a most melting tale about severance from her children and

the rending of her maternal heart by the domestic slave-trade. The other two were aged men of above four-score years. The story of one I will here relate.

Thomas Bailey lived in a little room in a third story, reached by a steep, narrow stairway. On entering, I excused my intrusion by announcing myself as a missionary to the poor. His countenance lighted up at this, and he said that he was always glad to see any of God's children. I soon elicited his history.

For more than fifty years of his life he was a slave on a Southern plantation. It was his fortune, however, to have an uncommonly kind master, who was an Englishman by birth. He had chosen for a wife a woman residing on a neighboring plantation, near a navigable river. He had himself as much happiness as could be expected by one of his lot. But the war of 1812 came on, and the British made depredations on the estates near the water-side. The master of his wife, fearing to lose his slaves by means of the enemy, resolved to send them off to Alexandria, to be sold by auction, and Bailey's wife and seven children among the rest. The husband and father was in agony. How inexpressibly precious were these eight living beings! He owned nothing in the world but them—the treasures of his heart, legalized by the Father of Spirits and the God of Love. These were to be torn forever from his embrace, from his sight, and perhaps to be scattered also from each other, brother

and sister, each in a different direction, and far away likewise from the mother that bore them, and who loved them as she did her life. But this horrid separation was prevented on the eve of accomplishment, by the enemy's burning the vessel in which they were to be taken to the slave-market. He now resolved to do his utmost, and dare any danger for their rescue. Under the cover of night, and by the blessing of God, he was soon able to convey his whole family on board a British vessel lying not far off in the river. What a foretaste of heaven must have been their ecstatic joy at such a deliverance—a fortune so different from the fate which shortly before seemed a very certainty.

They were all carried by their new friends to one of the West India Islands, where they staid a year. During this period one of the children was taken away, not to irretrievable bondage, but to the freedom of the heavenly kingdom. They then emigrated to Halifax in the British Provinces. Here his home was soon made lonely and his heart desolate by the decease of his wife. He had before led a life of good ordinary morality, but he had not experienced the regenerating power of religion, and he felt the need of consolations which this world had not to give. By the grace of God, under the preaching of a Baptist clergyman, he became a professed disciple of Jesus. His account of his conversion and of his subsequent life was full of touching pathos. "O!" said he, "the Lord called to me in a voice that went to the core of my heart,

and I obeyed him. He gave me the influences of his Spirit ; then, O ! how I loved my heavenly Father ; I loved all my fellow men ; I loved all the animals, the very creeping things, indeed every thing that God made, because he made them. I was very ignorant, for I had never learned to read, and I was ready to receive instruction from any body ; a little babe might have taught me, I felt so humble and I so wanted to learn."

He said that he now felt how very important it was that his children should be trained up aright. Their mother being dead, all the care came on him, and he felt that as a Christian father he had a great duty to perform. Although by going out at jobbing in the city he might make his labor much more profitable, yet, having learned at the South to cobble shoes, he resolved to pursue this business now, at home, so that he might always be there to take care of his children. He could not teach them much, but he could keep them from some evil and do them some good. He had them kneel around him every night and morning while he prayed to their Father in heaven. At their humble meals, he made them cross their hands and bow their heads while he craved the Divine blessing on their food. Thus he continued in his bereavement, and trained up his six children till they were old enough to take care of themselves. Then he went out from home to work at much larger pay. He continued in Halifax till about a year previous to the time I met him, when he came to Boston, to -visit a

daughter. O! thought I, would that the fathers, even the well-educated fathers of this favored city, were as faithful as you. I spoke of Sabbath privileges and of religious meetings generally. "O!" exclaimed he, "they are very precious to me. I could not do without them. Prayer is my meat, my drink, my very breath of life." What a beautiful climax — the earnest eloquence of a devout heart! He could not read a word, but on an old desk lay a Bible, to which I alluded, and he remarked that he should be very thankful if I would read a chapter. I therefore read the CIII. Psalm. When I had got through, and looked from the book to the man, I found him bending forward, his arms resting on his lap, his lips slightly parted, his dark eye distended, and all swimming and glistening with the moisture of emotion, and his face was alive, every particle of it, with expression. The beaming light of intense Christian faith, hope and love, irradiated his features; and that old, wrinkled, ebony countenance was absolutely beautiful; it was the beauty of holiness; like that of those who had passed within the veil. I felt that he was nearer to the mercy-seat than myself, and was of worthier utterance before the Hearer of prayer, and I requested him to pray. At once, as if the act was as familiar to him as converse with a friend, he knelt down and poured out one of the most heart-expressing and heart-stirring prayers I ever heard. His voice was not loud and boisterous as that of devotion sometimes is, with the ignorant enthusiast,

but was subdued to a soft, yet still most earnest tone, and flowed into my ear with a melody like notes from music-chords. They indeed flowed into my heart. I had not an idea originating with myself; his thoughts and feelings were individualized directly from him into me. That prayer, indeed, seemed to run directly through my soul—a sort of religious electricity, kindling and melting and fitting it to mingle with and be blessed by those holy influences from the heavenly Father, which were ready and waiting for union with the spirit of his child yet in the flesh.

Such was my interview with the poor old African. When I came away, it was with tardy steps and lingering looks behind. It seemed as if I had been at the gate of heaven, and had caught a last earthly glimpse of one about to pass through. Indeed, I saw him no more, for, on returning to the place a few days after, I found that he had gone to one of his children in another city.

Phrenologists say that the constitutional religious tendencies are stronger in the Negro than in any other race of men. I believe this aged saint's character to be an exponent of the religious capacity of his people. I believe in all sincerity that when the African South shall have freedom and the Bible, and a due Christian culture, the kingdom of heaven will come there with a power and a glory unsurpassed. Indeed, I have the faith that it will be the religious paradise of the land, and an example to the proud white world which it cannot despise, yea, of which it will almost stand in awe.

EMULATION,

AS A

MOTIVE TO STUDY.

NOTE.—The following is an extract from a Lecture on “Fixing the Attention of the Young,” delivered before the American Institute of Instruction in 1834. The views presented are respectfully submitted to Parents and Teachers, as differing somewhat from prevalent opinions and practice.

EMULATION, AS A MOTIVE TO STUDY.

WHAT is emulation as it has been applied in education? It is the desire to outdo others who belong to the same class and are engaged in the same studies. It amounts to close and personal rivalry, and implies that if one gains and rejoices, another must lose and regret. Certain external distinctions are offered as marks of superiority. In common schools, there is the **HEAD**, and the gradations of honor thence to the *foot*. Then there are medals, books, and certificates, held up as prizes to be contended for. In colleges, there are what are called **PARTS**, from the grand oration down to the insignificant and unspoken theme, which indicates that even stupidity has been struggling for honors, or that idleness has had them conferred, such as they are, whether it would or not. Those who receive these tokens, or rather the most respectable of them, are regarded as meritorious, above others to whom they have not been accorded. Such is the system that has prevailed almost universally, and continues

almost as universally as ever. My first objection to it is the exceeding injustice to which it gives rise. We should naturally say that a person's reward in any course should be in proportion to his exertions. When one arrives at some exalted station, through a long course of unremitted and laudable endeavor, our feelings toward him in respect to the distinction, are far different from what they would be, had it been conferred on him by inheritance, or by the intrigues or blind impulse of party. Supposing that the language of Scripture is to be literally fulfilled, and that mankind are to be rewarded and punished in a future life by judicial decision, all would anticipate, with the utmost confidence, from Infinite justice, that it would reward according to the efforts that had been made, and the difficulties that had been overcome. No one would dishonor the Divine judgment-seat, with even the flitting fancy, that he whose moral path had been smooth and of easy ascent, would receive so warm a plaudit and so rich a crown, as he who had attained the same height over a rough and impeded way. Reason and conscience tell us what would be justice in heaven, and should we listen, would they not tell us what would be justice on earth? In the educational course, if external rewards are conferred, ought they not to be conferred according to the same rule; that is, according to the exertions made, and the obstacles surmounted? But it is not so in our seminaries of learning. There, the members of a class are treated as if they all possessed by nature equal

ability to run the same race, and that the difference between one and another, lay in the heart—in the will rather than in the intellect. The purpose of the rewards proposed, is to arouse the sleeping affections, and impel the sluggish will. Of course, the award ought to be made somewhat in proportion as the heart has been given to duty.

Now scholars differ from each other in intellectual capacity, full as much as in features or in bodily dimensions and strength, and perhaps more. Some are inferior to others in certain particular faculties, and some are inferior in the whole intellect. There are those whom nature has endowed with extraordinary talents. These will, perhaps, assume and maintain the first rank at recitation, with very little exertion in comparison with others. Such have been known to be among the most idle and dissipated at college, and yet to bear away some of the first honors, when in fact there belonged to them no more real desert for their scholarship; than belonged to Goliath for wielding a spear like a weaver's beam in his giant hand, instead of a weapon of ordinary size. It may not indeed very often happen that a brilliant but profligate young man takes the higher honors, but it does very frequently, indeed I may say always, happen that the rewards are in proportion to natural capacity, rather than to exertion or a conscientious devotion to the objects of education. Now is this justice? It surely is; I hear it replied by the advocate for emulation. If a youth possesses superior powers,

“he has a right to all the fruits of these powers. He has a right to take the standing his Maker has given him. It is his estate to which he can make out the best of all titles—the gift of God.” It is rejoined that such a youth has justice done him, he enjoys the fruits of his powers, he takes his proper standing, whether the head of a spelling class at school or the English oration at college be given him or not. His abilities, if exercised, will be known; his companions will accord to him the distinction of possessing them, and he will be conscious of them himself. Now this accorded distinction, and this conscious possession, are those fruits which he has a right to enjoy. Besides, the ease with which he can accomplish his studies, is another happy consequence which no one can take from him. Then again, the Phrenologists maintain that God’s own finger, as it were, writes the name and the number of talents on the very brow of their possessor, for all the world to read, will they but study the divine hand-writing. If this be true, there are insignia before the eyes of all, which no man can take away. At any rate, to say that talent cannot have its proper standing and due honor, without medals, parts, and other prizes, is about the same as saying that the great stars of heaven show not forth their superior magnitude and surpassing glory, unless observed through a gilded telescope.

The next objection which may be brought against emulation, as it has been used, is the injury to

health of which it is often the occasion. The close competition between individuals, in our colleges especially, has laid the foundation, in many a constitution, for feeble health the whole life afterward. It has caused many to be cut off in the flower of their days. A young man born in poverty and obscurity, is endued with a superior nature. He aspires to ascend the intellectual heights and command that wide horizon of knowledge which is the privilege of the educated few. He flings aside the rustic's tools and garb, and fits hastily for college. He perhaps barely enters, in consequence of too brief a preparation. There he finds that rank and distinction depend on brilliancy of recitation. He has not wealth, he has not genteel and influential connections, and he feels that his success in life, at the outset at least, depends somewhat on his collegiate standing. A high standing then, he is resolved to attain; but it is only by severe, sickening, and an almost killing application that he can rise above his disadvantages. He bows himself to the work, and he bows himself perhaps to the yoke of long and wretched infirmity, in consequence. Perhaps he is borne from consumption's lingering bed to the grave, before half the collegiate course shall have been passed. He had better continued at the hammer or the plough, and been contented with the reading of labor's scanty leisure.

But it is not always the student, such as just described, who is the only sufferer; the rich, the

well prepared, and at the same time highly talented, sometimes sacrifice health and life to the merciless spirit of emulation. Now the physical well-being of the young, should be most carefully watched over by their instructors and guardians. Is not a system, therefore, which directly tends to the destruction or jeopardy of health, to say the least, somewhat questionable?

I have spoken of the danger of the emulation system to the bodily health; there is still greater and more general danger to the spiritual nature. What anxieties does it occasion to the alternately hoping and fearing aspirant! What discouragement, despondency, disappointment, and despair, does it introduce into what should be the calm, self-possessed, and steadily advancing mind! Then there is that bane of the sweet social relations, envy; and with it, detraction; and next, bitter malignity. Such, at least, is the tendency of emulation. The principle may be likened to that diabolical spirit who was the father of sin, who was the mother of death.

There is another evil; emulation diverts the student's aim from the real end of study. He is gradually led to think, not of the discipline of his mind and the acquisition of knowledge, but of the mere art of recitation and the mark he may thereby acquire. I have known young men who entered college with no other intention than to inform and elevate and strengthen their minds, who soon forgot everything but the paltry honors they must

yield to their rivals, if they did not strive for them themselves. The pleasures of study were altogether swallowed up in hopes and fears about recitation and rank. And they were heartily rejoiced when the collegiate course was terminated, not because they had been educated and prepared for high usefulness, but because the torture of rivalry was done, and they were freed from anxiety and miserable suspense, concerning their final standing and closing honors.

Again, emulation has been far from producing its intended effect. It has had a directly contrary effect on no small portion of students. Nearly, if not quite one-half of every class at college, are entirely unreached by this principle, unless it be to stop and stupefy the intellect, instead of stimulating it. They reason in this way—if we cannot stand *high*, let us have no standing at all. Let us be known as devoting our time to anything rather than our prescribed books, then our low rank will be imputed not to the lack of talents, but of industry. Some of the young at the greater seminaries, much prefer to be thought destitute of morals than of intellect. I have no doubt that emulation, in past times, has been of considerable use, in consequence of the absence of other and better motives. Had this principle not been artificially and keenly excited, and other motives not been applied, there would indeed have been but little study, and our seminaries would have been little better than halls of amusement and social lounging places.

The philosophy of youthful nature has not been understood, and the true and best modes of education have been undiscovered ; during this period of ignorance, the emulation of the schools has been better than no exciting motive at all. For, a large portion of the studies have been of such a character, or have been presented in such a manner, that the youth would hardly pursue them with diligence, without some strong stimulant. He would scarcely do it for the simple pleasure of study. Emulation, like the principle of resentment, was implanted by the Creator, to be of use in the primary stages of the progress of our race, when the animal prevailed over the spiritual, in the human constitution. As better motives become understood and can be brought to bear on the conduct with efficiency, this primitive, coarse and *heathen* stimulant should be let alone. Nevertheless, it will not altogether slumber, but, like resentment, it will kindle up and fire the heart sufficiently, without any artificial cherishing.

No one is pleased to be outdone. You may say not a word about excelling, present no prize, and accord not the least external distinction, and still the native emulation of many will not permit them to be easily excelled. I have no objection to this natural and gentle operation of the principle in question, provided that envy and other unhappy feelings do not intrude into its company. I would even say that there are some cases in which I would take pains to excite emulation to keener ac-

tion. There is now and then a dull and sluggish soul, which needs the aid of such a stimulant. "In such hearts this quickening fire needs to be lighted up," that is, I would add, if all better and nobler motives fail of effect. But that these few may be properly affected, it is not necessary to continue that system of external and graduated distinctions, now in general use. The dull and sluggish, the doubtful and discouraged, better go directly to the manual drudgeries of life, than that others, many or few, should rankle with the prick of a goad, they do not need. But under the operation of this system, let it be repeated, where one of the above mentioned unfortunate natures is happily excited, two are made more inveterately stupid, or plunged into a gloomier despair.

Permit me now to propose a substitute for the objectionable principle, which may be brought, I think, to bear with no small effect on the minds and efforts of the young. I can call this substitute by no better name than SELF-EMULATION. Let the young be encouraged to study, from a comparison of themselves with themselves. One of the first principles developed in our nature, is the love of increasing power. The child delights to excel himself—to do more than he has ever done before. What beaming pleasure on the countenance, when he can take a few more steps without falling, or can lift and hold with his little hands a larger and heavier article, or when he has mastered in articulation and memory another word! Now let this

principle be seized on early, and used continually. When the pupil enters school, let the teacher, as far as may be, acquaint himself with his natural capacities, and with the acquisitions already made. Let a record of these be put in a book, kept for this purpose. Let this record be the starting point, from which his future progress is to be measured. Let him be made acquainted with his own condition and capabilities, and receive approbation in proportion as he shall rise above this point. Let the pupil be continually referred to his past condition, as one from which he is continually to distance himself, according to the ability naturally possessed, for this is always to be taken into the account; then, if progress be unavoidably slow, the *endeavor* will receive the commendation. In this way, there need be no straining and abuse of nature, no anxiety of heart; the path of learning may be one of pleasantness and peace.

In this spirit of self-comparison and self-surpassing, there is a rivalry which can do no harm. Here, too, is a rival always present, if I may continue thus figuratively to speak. Self is always present with self. The exertions cannot be relaxed for the want of the exciting cause.

This emulation may be applied to the whole man—to moral as well as intellectual improvement. Let the moral character be always taken into the account, and put on the register likewise. It has been an exceeding and very lamentable mistake, that the mental and moral education have been so

separated, or rather, perhaps, that the moral has been so utterly neglected on all hands. Whoever has the charge of a young mind, should be a moral educator; should be as well qualified in this respect as in every other; should be as scrupulous and unweariedly assiduous in this respect as in any other. But I will defer further remark on this topic to another head of my lecture. Let me now insist that the condition and character of the whole mind be registered, from time to time, in the appropriate book. This registry is a very important particular. The remembrances of both teacher and pupil are more or less evanescent, and may be inaccurate. They may not correspond with each other, any more than business accounts which buyer and seller carry only in the memory. But black and white, which both agree upon at the time, cannot afterward be disputed. These notations strike the senses, and thereby give impulse to the feelings. They are like mile-stones on the way, to inform how far we have come, and with what speed we are moving.

In the examinations of schools and colleges, let the record be open to those appointed to examine the classes. Let them be open to the inspection of any one, and especially of the anxious relatives and interested friends of the pupil, that they may know his exact merits through the whole course. How little, how very little do parents know of the condition and character of their sons in college. As to their intellectual standing, the parts, as they are

called, indicate something, but nothing very accurately. If a young man receives a low part, or none at all, his confiding friends are easily made to believe that the college dispensers of honor have been unjust. But of the moral character of a son, the parents in general know absolutely nothing. They can judge only from the exhibitions of himself he makes at home. If the youth happens to receive the distinction of rustication or dismissal, it must of course be supposed that all is not right. But even these notorious tokens of disapprobation, do by no means accurately indicate the character. Sometimes the simple-hearted and quite innocent, having been allured into some sportive enterprise, are detected and punished, although their moral character, in general, may be incomparably superior to many who hold the noiseless but dark and devious tenor of their way. Instances could be mentioned, in which parents have rejoiced that their sons were so diligent and orderly at the distant seminary, when at this very time, these loved and hopeful ones were among the most idle and dissolute.

Now, in the proposed registry of character, there can be no deception, no escape. At any time, the scholarship and the morals may be ascertained, by making the proper reference. What if friends be mortified and the youth put to shame? Is it not better, than that his time and money be utterly thrown away, and perhaps his constitution be injured or his morals corrupted for life? But such mortification and shame will very seldom take

place. The youth will understand, at the threshold of the seminary, the system to be pursued and the destiny awaiting. He knows that a map of his whole character is to be drawn, as far as it is discoverable, and that this is to be open to the inspection of all, and to remain in the archives of the institution, to be traced by all his friends, and even descendants, who may enter or visit the seminary, forever afterwards. Now should the student know all this beforehand, and be continually conscious of it as he proceeds, he would, I doubt not, commence with an impulse, go on with a momentum, and close with an improvement and an honor, which would cause the venerable Alma Mater, now slumbering in her prejudices, to rejoice most heartily that she had at length awaked from her ancient repose. The instances of mortification and shame would be far less numerous than they are now, as seldom as mortifying and shameful things now come to light. I believe that self-emulation would be a very general feeling, and self-improvement the general aim and attainment.

“But this system will cost quite too much trouble. It will require a minuteness of supervision which cannot be afforded. The plan is not feasible.” In answer to this objection it may be observed, that it is more than probable that the time and money now expended in the long run, in managing the refractory, quelling rebellions, and repairing depredations, would be amply sufficient for the constant and minute supervision of the plan

proposed. But if it be not so, let all pomp, show and circumstance be abolished, which do not confer a greater good on our seminaries than might be obtained in some other way, at the same expense. Why shall usages be retained simply because they are usages? It is the best possible education of the greatest possible number that we want, and at the least possible cost consistent with the greatest good on the whole. Must the great and widely scattered public suffer, that the pleasant literary associations of a few may be kept fresh and not lose their hold on the heart? I have no particular objections, however, against the customary literary festivals. All I would urge is, that they had better be abolished than that such minute and particular attention should not be given to each individual, as to confer on him the most thorough mental and moral education. Let the great end be kept always broad in view, and the most direct course be taken towards that end. Let the paths of education, like those of business, be straight. The people of the country, in visiting the city, make the most of time and money. They do not wind along the ancient and crooked, but more verdant and flower-scented ways; they take the turnpike and the rail-road. So it should be with those they employ to educate their children. Their road should be straight; and they should adopt, moreover, whatever new and real facilities, invention may from time to time bring to light.

It may be thought that too much is expected

from this *booking* of character and this self-emulation. It is replied, that these are but a part of the system; these alone, truly, may not produce the effect above anticipated. Light should be thrown on the student's way, and impulse given to his heart in connection with these. For instance, the student should have instruction respecting his nature and destiny, such as hitherto has been very uncommon in schools and colleges. The young have generally entered and continued in these institutions as thoughtless, and indeed as ignorant of the real objects of existence and ends of education, as they were of the particulars of a science which had not yet been discovered. They go to college, for instance, because custom has made a course there necessary to what are called the learned professions. Or they go to attain a respectability of standing which they could not otherwise possess.

At academies and common schools, no better views, nor generally so good, could be expected to prevail. Now such are the motives with which parents send their children to the places of learning, and such are the motives with which their children go, if they go from any other motive than that they are *sent*. And are they imbued with a loftier spirit by their instructors? Most certainly not, in general. Now it ought not to be thus. A child should be taught as early as he is capable, his real nature and great destiny. He should be taught that his true self is a soul, and not the material, sensual and perishable body. Let him know that

this is but the "house he lives in," to quote the apt language of a benefactor of youth. Make him realize that the house was made for the inmate, and not the inmate for the house. Make him realize that himself, that is, this invisible but conscious soul, shall not and cannot die as the body does. Let him understand that going to school, that education, has reference to a future life ; to eternity as well as to time. That indeed it may make him more respectable and useful, comfortable and happy in this life, but the principal end is the life to come. Teach him that every step forward in true knowledge, is an advance on an endless way ; that every new truth he acquires is his forever, a treasure, as it were, laid up in heaven ; and that increasing strength and facility is a preparation for, and an approach to, that ability necessary to climb the heights, gather the riches, and wear the glories of the spiritual universe. I would, of course, use a simpler mode of expression than this, always adapting the language to the young comprehension. Now, fill the pupil's soul and fire his aspirations, as early as possible, with these ideas, and let them glow with an increasing faith and fervency, as he shall proceed from stage to stage, and with what exceeding effect may they be brought to bear on the later periods of his education. Then the sciences of the material creation will be presented to him, in all their beautiful details and magnificent extent ; then the principles of that mind will be more clearly unfolded, by which he has dominion over the Divine works,

and by which, like the Infinite Maker himself, he has a glory above the heavens. And then he cannot but feel how unworthy of himself is idleness, and how utterly beneath himself and abominable, is that sensuality into which the young man is now so prone to fall.

When the young shall thus duly realize that the great end, not only of this life but of eternity, is the growth of the soul, how will self-emulation take hold of the spirit with ever-abiding and ever-impelling power. They will constantly realize that it is as much their nature and destiny to rise perpetually above their present selves, as it is to think and to feel. To catch the beautiful figure of the Lecture on Emulation, of last year, that ladder which the sleeping Patriarch saw in his dream, will be placed before the youth without a vision; its foot supported by earth, its summit leaning on the skies. Most truly the ladder will be before him, without those evil remembrances, class emulation and personal rivalry. He may not be unconscious of the radiant way, and active steps of ascending companions; but his intenser thoughts will be given to the beckoning angels, leaning with sweet sympathy from the heavenly verge, and to the glorious avenues that open endlessly upward and beyond.

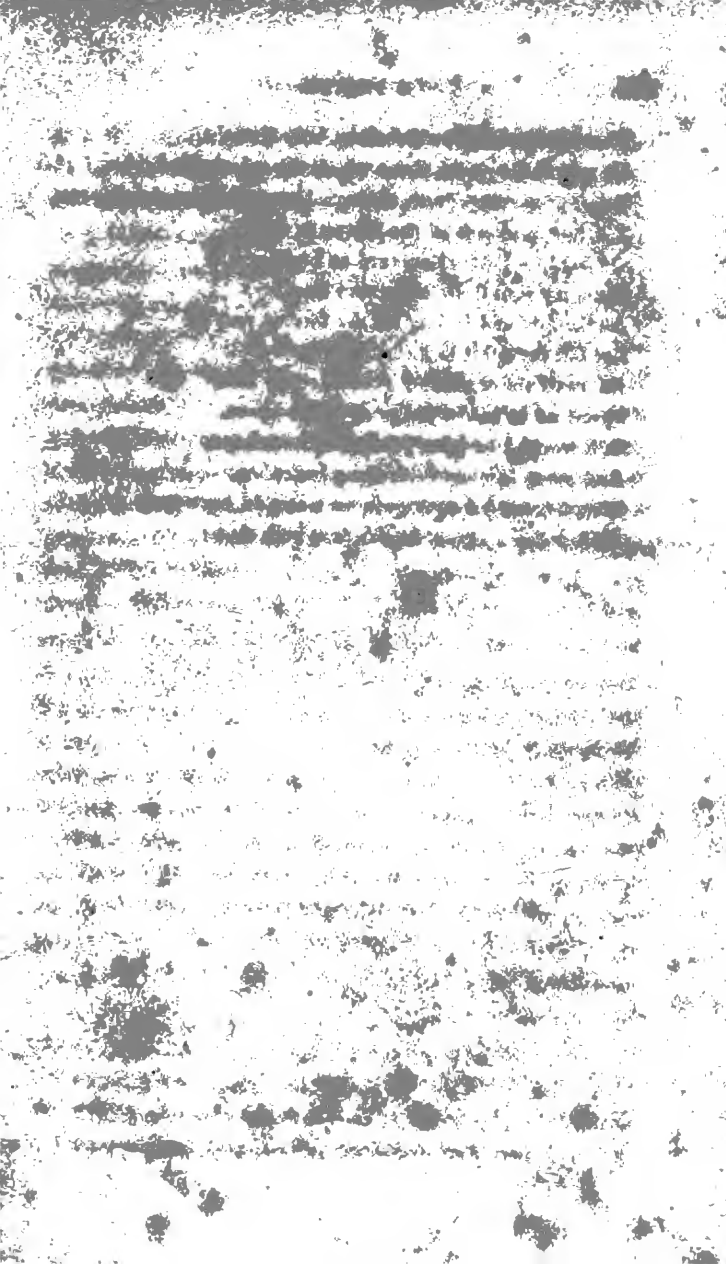


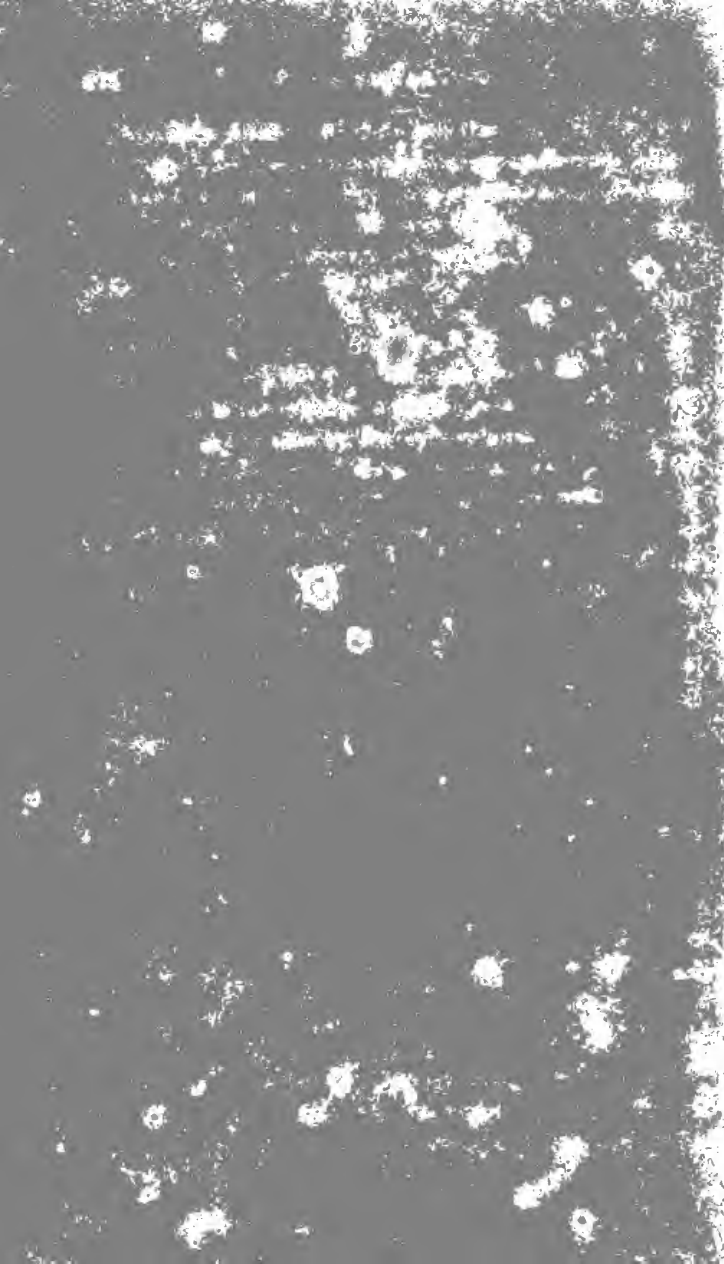
A PRAYER.

"BE YE THEREFORE PERFECT, EVEN AS YOUR FATHER WHICH IS IN
HEAVEN IS PERFECT."

FATHER in Heaven! Thou who hearest pray'r,
Who *madest* me—who makest me thy care,
Be glory thine, that I am not the clay
Of brutish life, that perisheth away,
But MAN,—earth's lord, in thine own image formed,
Breathing thy breath, by thine own spirit warm'd;
Deathless as thou art; made to mount tow'rd thee,
O'er *self* triumphing, through eternity.
O blest command, by thy Beloved, given,
Of, "Be ye perfect," as THOU art, in heaven!
Thou Giver, kind, of every perfect gift,
Whose height, the low above themselves can lift,
Whose strength upon the strengthless sheds a might,
Whose radiance round the dark diffuses light—
O let thine all-sufficiency descend
On *my* beginning for *thy* glorious end!
Though such thy purpose—such I am to be,
I fail—I fall, unless I hold to thee;
Thy child would fasten to those living ties,
By which the faithful cling and climb the skies;

That chain of hallow'd feeling, holy thought,
Up which they tend, *down* which thy spirit's brought,
Whose links from earth, through heaven still bright'ning run,
Till lost in glories of the HIGHEST ONE.
O Gracious Father! upward as I spring,
Upon my soul thine influences fling ;
As thought and feeling lift the fervent pray'r,
Let fall thy spirit in its fullness there ;
As swell the strains of gratitude and love,
Speed me to nobler songs of praise above.
Still would I be what yet I ne'er have been,
And grasp at glory faith alone hath seen,
Would tread where angels, arch-angels, have trod,
To stand *perfection*, face to face with God !







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